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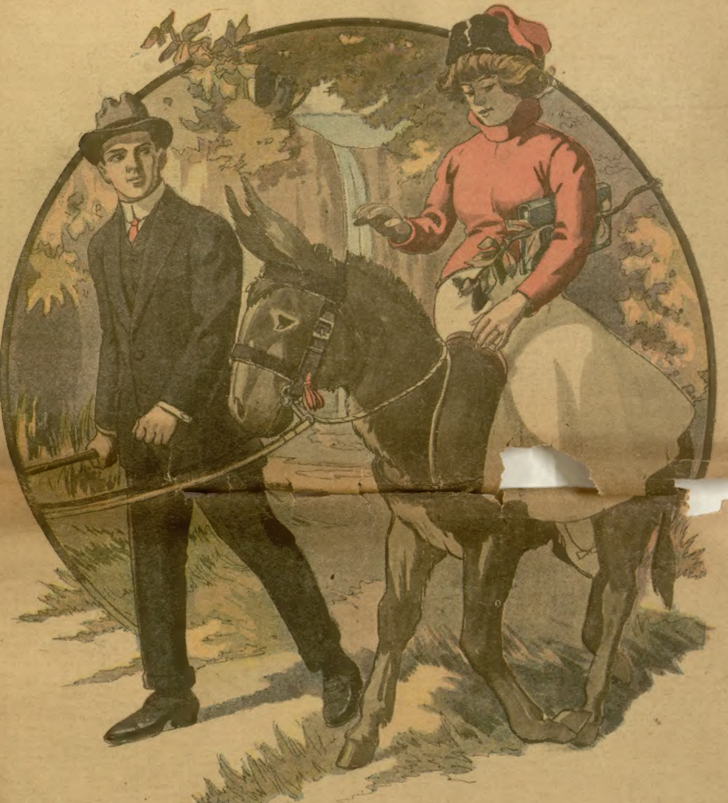

At Barclay House

Or, A Detective Puzzle - By Will Lisenbee

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CHAPTER I.

MARK SHELDON, a young man of 30, swung himself from the caboose of a local freight train that had just pulled up at the little station of Dogwood. He deposited his suitcase on a truck on the platform and stood looking about him, while the train, with harsh impact of bumpers and clamor of couplers, moved on its way. It was a warm day in October. Mark Sheldon mopped the perspiration from his brow and let his eyes wander to the road that zigzagged up the slope between the red and yellow fringes of dogwood and maple toward Barclay Springs. Half hidden behind the crest of a ridge, the roof of Barclay House made a gray daub against the gayly colored hills beyond.

J. Frank Hartman, the station agent, came out and seated himself on the truck.

"If you are going up to Barclay House," he said, "you'll have to foot it unless you wait till the hack comes down to meet 112, which is due here at 3:54."

"Oh, I think I shall not wait," said Mark. "I shan't mind the walk. It isn't over a mile, is it?"

"A mile and a quarter," replied Hartman, "but the road is good and the scenery worth while." He flung his hand toward the distant hills with the air of an artist. He had a pleasant face and was not over 25. "I am going up to

Barclay House myself in a few minutes," he added, "and if you don't mind, I'll just walk up with you."

"I shall be pleased to have your company," said Mark. "My name is Mark Sheldon."

"And mine is J. Frank Hartman," replied the station agent with something of an air of pride in the sound of the name.

The two shook hands, murmuring expressions of mutual pleasure.

"There isn't much doing here," said Hartman, "and as there will be no train in for three hours, I'll have plenty of time to stretch my legs a little."

He closed and locked the door of the office, and the two set out up the road in the direction of Barclay House.

This was Mark Sheldon's first visit to Missouri. His home was in Chicago, where he had achieved some success as a private detective.

But his coming to Barclay House was in no way connected with his profession as a detective. Briefly stated, Barclay House, the Springs, and a large tract of land surrounding the hotel had recently come into Mark Sheldon's possession thru the death of his uncle, Silas Barclay, who had left it to him as a legacy. And Mark had come to Barclay House to have a look at his newly acquired property, and to make arrangements regarding the renewal of the lease.

Now, it happened that J. Frank Hartman had always had a deep interest in the study of crime and criminals, and had dreams of sometime becoming a detective. He had fallen into the habit of regarding each stranger who came to the little station of Dogwood as a possible criminal, bent on some deep-laid plot to commit murder or robbery, and whose deed might furnish the stepping-stones to his fame as a detective. Not that he suspected people in general of harboring evil designs, but from the many celebrated cases he had read of, where great crimes had been committed, he had discovered that the guilty person or persons were usually the ones not suspected at the outset. So he had come to the conclusion that the only way to become a detective was to suspect every one.

Before he had walked a hundred yards with Mark Sheldon, he had stored in his mind a complete inventory of all the stranger's visible belongings, from the toes of his shoes to his soft gray [illegible] hat; had noted the fleck of gold in one of his upper front teeth and a sligh[illegible] the right han[illegible] [illegible] re interesting channel.

"You are a stranger in this region?" he ventured.

"I live in Chicago, and have never been here before in my life," confessed Sheldon. "I am a relative of the late Silas Barclay."

Hartman's face showed a sudden light. "By George! then you must be the one who has inherited Barclay House?" he cried.

"Yes, and I am here to look after the property," said Mark.

"I am glad to welcome you among us," said Hartman, "and hope you will decide to stay here. I had about made up my mind that you were a detective."

Mark Sheldon was surprised at the announcement. Could it be possible, he thought, that the little fame he had achieved as a private detective in Chicago had penetrated the obscure precincts of Dogwood?

"What led you to think that?" he asked, with a smile.

"Oh, I thought it likely that a number of them might be running out to Barclay House."

"Why?" asked Mark.

"Then you have not heard the news?"

"Why, no, I have heard nothing."

"There was a murder committed in Barclay House last night, and the whole region is excited over it."

"Good heavens!" cried Mark. "Who was murdered?"

"A man by the name of Basil Smoot. He was stabbed to death in his room sometime during the night. Who he was or what he was no one seems to know. They are holding the inquest right now, I understand, and there may be some new developments in the case. That is why I wanted to run up to the Springs. The case interests me."

"By George! this is startling!" cried Mark. "Have they discovered any clew?"

"Not that I have heard. It is a deucedly bad thing for a hotel to have such crimes committed in it."

"That's so," assented Mark. "But I dare say there is not much business at the Barclay House, anyway."

"You are quite mistaken. The house has been full nearly all summer. But just now, as the weather is growing cooler, many have returned to their homes. Do you think of taking charge of the place yourself?"

"Oh, no. I may sell it if I have a fair offer. I want to look it over first."

"I should consider it a good piece of property. But as I said, the fact that a murder has been committed in the house is not the best sort of advertisement—especially to the timid who have come for their health. The mystery surrounding the case is likely to magnify its importance; the newspapers will see to that. But once the mystery is solved, the public will quickly lose interest in it."

"That is quite true," agreed Mark. "I shall make a careful inquiry into the case as soon as I reach the hotel, and it is no more than likely that I shall offer a reward for the apprehension of the guilty party or parties."

"A good idea," nodded Hartman. "A little money is a wonderful lubricant when applied to the machinery of the law. And by the way, Mr. Sheldon," he went on, lowering his voice and speaking in a confidential tone, "I do not claim to be a detective, but I have dabbled in that sort of thing in an amateur way for some time, and it is barely possible that I may be of some service in uncovering this mystery."

"Good!" cried Sheldon. "If you can do anything to help clear up the mystery you shall be suitably rewarded."

"Oh, I'm not thinking of the reward particularly," Hartman made haste to give assurance. "You know we all have our hobbies, and we ride them—not for the sake of any sordid gain, but we do it, like the artist, for art's sake."

"I can well understand that," said Sheldon. "Have you had any success?"

"None worth mentioning, for as you well know, there is little opportunity in Dogwood for a detective. However, I don't mind saying that I have found my theories to be quite in harmony with the facts in cases I have followed in the papers. I work on theories evolved by analysis and elimination."

"Very good. Have you given the Smoot case any attention?"

"Sure thing! It's the first real important case that has come within my reach—and I am trying my hand at un[illegible] mystery. That is why I [illegible] o the Springs right now."

[illegible] success," said Mark, "and [illegible] he added. "I may as well [illegible] the job a couple of years in Chicago."

"Why, now, that's fine!" cried Hartman. "I am glad, indeed, to know this and thank you for your confidence. Shake!"

He grasped Mark's hand cordially. "I am going to help you all I can," he announced. "You are the first real detective I have ever had the pleasure of meeting, and it will be of deepest interest to me and give me great pleasure to be your understudy and take notes of your methods of work, if you will so honor me."

"Oh, I am no William J. Burns," laughed Mark. "I shall be glad to have your assistance."

"You shall have it." Hartman bent his head in thought for a moment. "Let me see," he mused. "Aren't you the young detective spoken of as having lit on the mystery of the Montague jewelry robbery case in Chicago about a year ago?"

Mark nodded. "Yes," he confessed, "that was my first bit of success, and it gave me a pretty good start."

"So I should imagine. This Smoot case will give you a chance to win another victory. I have picked up a few points in the case, but I'm not going to intrude these on you just at present. I shall be interested to see if you take up the same threads. It's going to be an interesting game, and I am real glad that you are on the job."

They were now ascending the high terrace to Barclay House. The grounds surrounding the building were spacious and shaded by spreading elms, with here and there a maple all aflame with the rich coloring of autumn. The building, a three-story wood structure, presented a rather imposing aspect, with its wide, sweeping verandas, vine-wreathed and inviting.

To the left, along the border of the grounds, a gray wall of a cliff rose almost perpendicularly to a height of fifty feet, and from the base of the wall a crystal stream of water fell with musical plash. On the right was a vine-wreathed pavilion, while farther back sinuous walks led thru shady nooks that breathed an air of isolation and quiet.

It was the dinner hour, and Mark Sheldon invited the station agent to dine with him. After they had finished eating Hartman went to interview the coroner's jurors, who had just finished their work, while Mark Sheldon, who had introduced himself to Mr. Aaron Quick, the landlord and lessee of Barclay House, was conducted into the latter's private office.

"I am truly glad you came right at this time, Mr. Sheldon," said the landlord, a troubled look on his face. "I am quite upset by this tragedy. And just to think, that the murderer may be under this roof at this very moment!"

CHAPTER II.

"I CAN understand how you feel about it," replied Mark. "It is a bad piece of business, and it is my purpose to stay here till the mystery is cleared up, if it is possible to get at the bottom of the facts. Did the inquest bring out anything in the way of a clew?"

"Not a thing; at least, nothing that was looked on as a clew. The fact that Smoot was a stranger here, and that there was positively nothing known of his past history, makes it all the harder to form any opinion respecting his murder. The coroner's jury simply brought in a verdict that he had come to his death by a wound in the region of the heart, inflicted by a dagger in the hands of some one unknown to the jury. But for all that there may have been many things in the testimony before the coroner that would furnish a clew to one skilled in picking out clews from the other rubbish."

"You are quite right," smiled Mark. "It is often the most inconsequential things—or things that so appear—which often prove to be of the greatest importance. I have had some little experience in such matters, and I shall be glad to have you give me the details of the whole affair as nearly as you can."

"There isn't a whole lot to tell, as I said before," said Quick. "Basil Smoot came to the hotel yesterday evening. He had arrived on the 3:54 train from St. Louis, and came up in the hack. He had a rather large leathern suitcase, but no other baggage. He registered as 'Basil Smoot, Yuma, Arizona.' He went to his room directly after his arrival, and had his suitcase carried after him. He was a man of about 35 years and was well dressed. He wore a diamond ri[illegible]—a very valuable one, if I might venture to [illegible]

"He impressed me as a man of means and a gentleman. He had a low, well-modulated voice, but had but little to say."

"What was his business?"

"He did not say. I took him to be a professional man—a lawyer or a doctor."

"Have you had any communication with any of his relatives or friends?"

"A telegram has been sent to Yuma, Arizona, but the authorities there have replied that no such person as Basil Smoot is known to them. So the body still lies here unclaimed by either friends or relatives. Among his effects were a valuable gold watch, a diamond ring, and something over six hundred dollars. This goes to prove, of course, that the motive for the murder was not robbery."

"I see. Were there any strangers at the hotel last night who might be suspected of having committed the crime?"

"He was the only stranger here. All the rest have been here some time, and not one of them, it appears, knew Smoot, or had ever seen him before. And there is no one among the guests or the servants who could, for any reason, be suspected. The guests are all, without exception, of the highest respectability—or have so impressed me. There are Mr. Henderson Wirt, a real estate man from Springfield, who has been staying here for his health; Judge Anson Lacy, from Jefferson City, a man well known among the legal profession of the State; and there is Mrs. Mary Baggs, a widow from St. Louis, a lady of refinement and wealth, who has been here most of the summer. She is suffering from asthma, and has found the water beneficial. She has with her a maid, Fanny Nelson, and her niece, Miss Katharine Turk, an accomplished young lady of some 18 or 20 years.

"There is Dave Snoggles, a cripple suffering from inflammatory rheumatism, and the servants; and there is not one among them all that any one would suspect, for if not for robbery, what could have been the motive for the crime? We must fall back on the theory of revenge; but who kills a stranger for revenge?"

"Of course, we must look for the motive," said Mark.

"That's it. I can't find it just yet. But I'm going to give you a look at the articles in Smoot's suitcase, and then you can take a look over the field. You'd better have a talk with the coroner and the sheriff, and make a survey of the case. I would like to have you do this, Mr. Sheldon, for this is a bad business for the hotel, and unless we can get the affair cleared up, it will be a regular hoodoo.

"I must go and have a talk with the sheriff, and I will leave you to your own devices for the present."

"Very well; you may tell the sheriff that I am offering a reward of five hundred dollars for the arrest and conviction of the murderer. It is possible I may increase the offer."

"Now, that's fine, Mr. Sheldon!" cried Quick. "I think that will help a whole lot. There's nothing like a little money to quicken the wits of the officers of the law. You must see the sheriff before he goes away. I'm sure he'll like to make your acquaintance and confer with you about the case."

Mark went down and strolled thru the spacious grounds. He was charmed with the prospect as he flung his gaze at the richly colored hills with the deep glens between. The musical splash of water came from the wall of the cliff, and the song of a bird in the red-bannered maple made him forget for the time the shadow of the tragedy that lay over Barclay House.

He walked across the grounds to the western extremity, then turning, followed the walk leading by a picturesque little summerhouse, vine-wreathed, the dark mass of cypress that covered it flecked with crimson bloom. The place looked inviting, and he strolled thru the vine-fringed door. Then he stopped abruptly.

Kneeling by a rustic seat was a girl. His first glimpse of her revealed a flexuous figure with a wealth of dark brown hair that glinted with flecks of gold where the dappling sunlight fell upon it thru the parted vines.

She looked up with a visible start as Mark Sheldon entered, and the face she turned to the intruder was flooded with a swift coloring. The calm beauty of the perfect oval face, the light in the deep gray eyes, flashed upon him like a sudden glow of light in a darkened room. Mark, whose timidity in the presence of a beautiful woman had always been one of his regrettable weaknesses, felt the awkwardness of the situation.

He lifted his hat involuntarily. "I beg your pardon," he stammered. "I had no intention to intrude——"

She rose and stood facing him, a faint smile playing about her parted lips.

"There is no need for apology," she said. "I have no right to monopolize any part of the grounds—even if I desired to be so selfish." She was holding a pretty mesh bag in her hand—a very pretty and shapely hand, Mark noticed, despite the sudden fluttering of his usually well-regulated heart. "I had spilled some trinkets," she added, her fingers toying with the silver mesh of the bag, "and I was searching for them when you came in."

Mark was in the act of turning away, with the rather vague notion that that was the proper thing to do, when he checked himself.

"If you will let me, I shall be glad to assist you," he said.

"Oh, you are very kind," she said. "I am not quite sure—but I thought I had recovered them all." She was exploring the contents of the little mesh bag as she spoke. "I think they are all here," she added, after a moment's pause. "I thank you very much." She nodded to him blithely, and passing thru the door, walked in the direction of the hotel.

And Mark Sheldon stood watching her as she passed leisurely down the path, a strange fluttering at his heart. He would make it a point to see her again. He was quite sure that she was the Miss Katharine Turk who was staying at the hotel with her aunt.

As he turned to continue his walk, he noticed a negro who had just come from the barn start down the path, but on seeing Mark, he stopped, hesitated a moment, and then turned abruptly and re-entered the barn. Mark noticed the movement and walked on and entered the barn. The negro's movements had attracted his attention—and had raised his suspicion. Why had he avoided meeting him?

The negro was busily engaged in currying a horse when Mark entered. He did not look up, tho it was evident that he saw the intruder. Now, however, he dropped the currycomb into a box, turned, and hurried away, passing out at the back door.

There was some reason for the negro avoiding him, Mark reasoned, and he would find out what that reason was, by and by. The man, he learned later, was Sam Wood, who had been employed for years at the stables, and was trustworthy in every respect.

CHAPTER III.

ON RETURNING to the hotel Mark was introduced to Mr. John Barrows, the coroner, and to Dick Spratt; the sheriff, who gave him all the details of the murder that had come to light at the inquest.

Basil Smoot had arrived at Barclay House about half-past four in the evening, had registered, asked for one of the best rooms in the house, and saying he might decide to remain several days, handed the landlord a twenty-dollar bill. He went to his room, having his suitcase carried after him.

"He had very little to say to the other guests," said the sheriff, "and he had the manner of a business man engrossed in his own affairs. He, went to his room about nine o'clock, and that was the last time he was seen alive. This morning, when he was called at eight o'clock, there was no answer. After repeated knocks the door was forced open, and Smoot was found lying across the bed, dead. He had not undressed, which would seem to indicate that the deed was committed before he had retired. A knife wound in the region of the heart told how he had come to his death. But the knife had been withdrawn and had been thrust under a rug near the window that looks out onto the veranda. There was no sign of any struggle excepting a slight disarrangement of the coverings on the bed. A bruise on the left temple indicates that the murderer must have struck his intended victim a heavy blow before using the knife. No one seems to have heard any sounds of the struggle that must have taken place in Smoot's room, tho it must have occurred early in the evening.

"Of course, it might have been supposed that the man had committed suicide, had it not been for the fact that the knife with which the deed was committed was found hidden in another part of the room. The knife is a dagger with an ivory handle, with no mark by which the ownership might be traced."

The sheriff conducted Mark to the room in which the murder had been committed. The body had been removed, but everything else had been left just as it was when the crime had been discovered.

Mark made a careful inspection of the room. The bed coverings showed signs of a struggle, but that was all. There was no stain of blood on the carpet or anywhere in the room, excepting on the bed where the body had been found. Mark inspected the door, and then turned his attention to the window. The sash was still down and fastened with a spring catch, just as it had been when the room was entered after the murder.

Mark ran his eyes carefully over every detail of the window and casing. But he could discover nothing that would suggest that the murderer had used the window as a means of reaching the room.

He went out on the veranda and inspected it from the outside. As he ran his eyes along the window-sill his attention was attracted by a small red stain! He bent quickly and gave it a closer inspection. It was a thin smear, not wider than his three fingers, and was near the center of the sill. But it was not blood, as he had at first suspected. It was merely a bit of red clay, but thru it ran a half-dozen scratches, such as might have been made by the nails in the heel of a shoe!

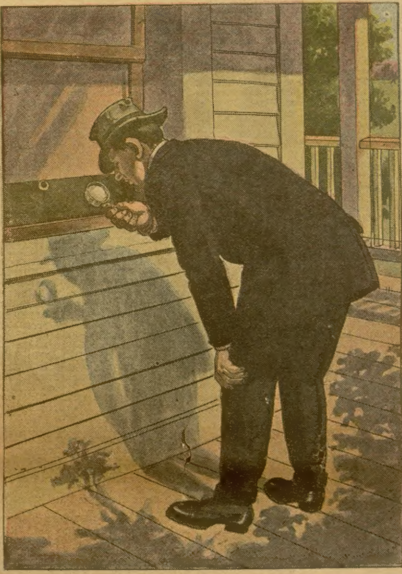
He produced a small magnifying glass, and by the aid of this he could readily discern the mark of the shoe heel where it had slipped across the sill. Some one had passed thru the window, and within the last twenty-four hours! This was evident from the fact that a bit of the red clay that had been left there by the shoe was still soft.

It was not likely that Smoot had used the window as a means of passing from his room, and it was entirely unlikely that any one else had employed it for that purpose.

On re-entering the room, Mark discovered traces of the red clay on the carpet, and by using his magnifying glass, he was able to get a dim outline of the footprint. Traces of clay were also discovered on the veranda and on the outside stairway leading to the porch below. He made a memorandum of his discoveries, and taking a bit of the red clay, he slipped it into an envelope and placed it in his pocket.

He next took a look at the body of the dead man. He had never seen the face before, as far as he could remember. His linen was marked "B. R. S.," but he noticed, not without surprise, that the tailor's label had been ripped from the suit he had worn when he met his death. There was some reason for this, and if this reason could be discovered, Mark felt, it might give some shadow of a clew. The shoes, he noted, were free from any particle of clay such as marked the window-sill and had left a trail across the veranda.

Mark said nothing about his discoveries, and after smoking a cigar on the porch, he went with Quick to take a look at Smoot's effects.


He discerned the mark of a shoe heel.

The suitcase, which was of black Russian leather, bore no labels, and there was no scrap of anything in its contents to establish his identity. It contained a few articles of wearing apparel, a comb and brush, a collapsible drinking cup, a magazine and a few other articles, including an old leathern pocketbook, containing a number of old coins and a curiously-fashioned gold ring.

The ring interested Mark more than anything else; not that it promised to offer any clew to the mystery, but there was something about its curious design that interested him. It was of dull Roman gold, a simple band, with two hearts of gold for a set. These, however, were broken at the center, showing very plainly that they had been a bridge connecting the ring with another band of gold, the break giving evidence that the two circlets had been violently torn apart. Inside the ring, engraved in small script, were the words:

"TILL DEATH!"

"A funny sort of a ring," commented the landlord. "It looks as if it had had rough usage. A wedding ring, maybe?"

"Possibly," nodded Mark, still looking at it thoughtfully. Was the broken ring an old relic that had been handed down from a generation long dead? Or was it tangled up in some way with the threads of the dead man's life? These thoughts came to Mark as he held it in his fingers. "I should like to keep this a little while, if you don't mind," he said.

"Certainly; keep it by all means," nodded Quick. "A little trinket like that often tells a bigger story, when a feller can get it to talk, than a trunkful of other rubbish."

"That's true," agreed Mark. "One can never tell." He put the ring in his purse, which he thrust into his pocket. "It's an odd sort of wedding ring," he added, reflectively.

"Is it a wedding ring?" asked Quick.

"I imagine so."

"It ain't a bad idea," ventured the landlord, "in case of a separation. The ring could be divided and kept as a sort of memento of broken hearts, or something of that kind." He laughed softly at the conceit of his words. "Anyhow, I hope the ring may help put the rope round the murderer's neck."

Mark was examining the old coins. Their dates, he noticed, were not such as would give them any value above their intrinsic worth. They were probably merely keepsakes, and he dropped them back into the wallet. "Was there any stranger about the premises last night?" he asked.

"Not that I know of," replied Quick.

"You did not hear any one walking on the south veranda last night after you retired."

"No, sir."

"Were any of your guests there during the evening?"

"I think not. The room occupied by Smoot is the only one that opens out onto the south veranda that was occupied last night, and the guests use the east veranda generally."

"Do you know whether Smoot left his room or not after he had gone to it to retire?" Mark asked.

"I don't know. Of course I wouldn't have seen or heard him if he had, as my room is on the ground floor."

"Do tramps frequent this region?"

"No; they usually follow the railroad, and we don't see one up here in a month of Sundays."

"You did not learn anything about Smoot's object in coming to Barclay House, did you?" Mark asked.

"He never said a word to me about it. All he did say was that he might remain several days."

"He made no inquiries about persons or places in this vicinity?"

"No; he made no inquiries about any one. I did notice that after he had registered, he turned the leaves of the register for a little, as if he were looking for some one's name."

"But he did not mention the name of any of your guests?"

"No, sir. I had an idea that he was looking for the name of some friend on the register who might have been here during the summer. I did not say anything, for I did not want to be inquisitive. It is a common thing for guests to look over the register, and I thought nothing of it."

"Do you happen to remember the part of the register he was examining?"

"No, I didn't. But now that I think of it, it will be quite easy to find the page, if you care to do so, for I remember that as he was about to close the register some ashes fell from his cigar between the leaves, and no doubt they are still there."

Mark smiled. "Say, Mr. Quick," he said, "I am inclined to believe you should have been a detective."

The landlord grinned. "I ain't so sure about that," he protested. "I never have been able to detect what becomes of the towels and the soap and other little things that get carried away from the rooms since I have been in the hotel business, and that has been near forty years. No, I guess I'll do better in the hotel business."

As Mark was descending the stairs he saw J. Frank Hartman standing below waiting for him.

"I'm going back to the station," he said, as Mark reached the landing, "but I'm coming back after six to have a talk with you. Maybe I've got a clew. We shall see."

CHAPTER IV.

MARK strolled up the slope, along a winding path that led among the flaming sumachs and the slender sassafras that flecked the hill with splashes of vivid color.

He lit a cigar and puffed at it vigorously. But just then he was not thinking of any possible clews to the mystery that hung over the Barclay House. He was thinking of a pair of deep gray eyes and the fluffy golden brown hair that had broken on his vision in the little summerhouse. He couldn't get these out of his mind.

His contact with the sterner and darker side of life had not made him unmindful of the beauty, the color, and the romance of the reverse side. He was even poetical at times. As he looked at the golden leaves that clung to the maples, and at the ruby red of the berries on the wild-rose bushes, it brought to his mind the golden bro locks and the ruby lips of the girl he had seen in the summerhouse.

He had already made up his mind that she was Miss Katharine Turk, the niece of Mrs. Mary Baggs, who was staying at Barclay House for her health. He had arrived at that conclusion easily enough. The presence of the girl added much to the attraction of the place, and Mark felt that he could with pleasure prolong his stay at the hotel. But his mind was occupied just now with the problem of making the acquaintance of Miss Turk in the conventional way. He was resourceful and not without some skill in such matters, and he had planned to have Mr. Quick arrange the details.

He made his way up the steep ascent to the summit of the ridge, and then followed the sinuous path down a steep incline to where a spring poured its crystal flood over the rocks with musical plash.

A bunch of willows clustered about the spring and threw their slender, graceful branches of pale green against the vivid color of the woods beyond. It was a charming spot, breathing an air of rest and quiet seclusion.

He paused at the spring, stooped, and drank of the water, which he scooped up in the hollow of his hand. Then he paused abruptly and stared at something at his feet. It was a footprint in the soft, yielding sand—the delicate print of a woman's shoe!

Even in the realms of romance it sometimes pays to have the instincts of the detective. Mark Sheldon recognized the print at a glance. It had been made by the shoe worn by the girl he had seen hunting for the lost trinkets in the summerhouse. The little corrugations which he had noticed on the flat rubber heel were all there printed in the sand as if ready for the molder's flask.

He bent over it. His face was flooded with emotion. It seemed to breathe an air of her presence. He put forth the ends of his fingers and touched it, and then, with an involuntary movement, touched his fingers to his lips.

Then as he lifted his eyes he saw

the girl sitting on a slab of stone not six yards away. Her eyes were fixed upon him, and he felt the color rising to his cheeks. Never before in all his life had he felt so foolish. His first impulse was to pretend that he had not seen her, but once his gaze fell upon her he was unable to turn his eyes away. The picture she made, sitting there under the red canopy of the maples, with a great mass of autumn leaves on her lap, and the yellow beams of the October sun making flecks of gold about her and on her hair, held him as if by a spell.

But he did not speak. He did not know what to say. What could a young man say under such embarrassing circumstances? He stood blinking foolishly at her like an owl in the broad light of day. His predicament must have appealed to her sense of humor, for she smiled very faintly. The smile encouraged him. It was not a smile of ridicule or reproof or contempt, but rather a pleasant manifestation of amusement. It served to modify Mark's embarrassment and bring back the power of speech.

"I beg your pardon——" he stammered, and then fell into confusion again. Her lips opened as if she were about to speak, but she uttered no sound. "I beg your pardon," he repeated, taking a new start.

"What for?" she asked, innocently.

He caught his breath with the sudden realization that he had been making a donkey of himself without just cause. It had just dawned on him that, from her position twenty feet away, it was hardly possible that she could have seen the footprint with which he had been taking such unbecoming liberties.

"Then you didn't really see what a foolish thing I was doing?" he blundered. He had removed his hat and now stood humbly waiting for her to speak.

"Is it foolish to take a drink of water from the spring?" she asked, and he wondered, as he saw the smile still lingering about her lips and in her dark gray eyes, if her question was not an evasion.

Be it known, that Mark was right in this, but he did not know that the girl, in having been a witness to his act of sentimental weakness, was just as anxious as he was to get rid of the embarrassment of it.

"I feared I might be intruding," Mark rallied, anxious to divert her mind from the unpleasant situation.

"Not at all," she assured. "This spring and the premises are open to all the guests at the hotel."

"A man may have a legal right to intrude his presence on a lady, but no gentleman would presume to take advantage of it," Mark said. "I was merely taking a stroll. The place looked inviting, and I stopped for a moment. Believe me, Miss Turk, I hadn't the least idea you were here."

"Oh, I am quite ready to believe that," she responded amiably, a little surprised but not displeased that he had spoken her name. There was something awkward in his manner—that was plainly visible—but for all that he bore the stamp of a gentleman. Tho he did not suspect it, Miss Turk knew quite well who he was and what had brought him to Barclay House. That was not all. She had already discovered the connection between the new owner of Barclay House and a certain young newspaper reporter who had won a certain amount of fame as a private detective in uncovering the mystery of the celebrated Montague jewelry robbery case. It would have pleased Mark Sheldon to have known all this, but he never suspected it.

"A pleasant evening," he said, and was turning to go. She held up her hand.

"Might I ask that you remain a little while?" she asked. "I may need some assistance——"

"It will be a great pleasure," he said. His face wore a look of surprise and pleasant anticipation.

She laughed a little hysterically. "I hurt my ankle as I came down the hill," she said, "and—I am not sure that I shall be able to walk back to the hotel—just at present."

"That's just too bad!" said Mark, in a sympathetic tone, drawing nearer. "I shall be glad indeed if I can help you. How did it happen?"

"I slipped as I set my foot on a loose stone, and somehow, my foot got into a gully and twisted my ankle. It was all I could do to get down to the spring. I thought if I waited a little I might be able to go on."

"I hope so. Does it pain you much?"

"Not when I keep still." She smiled faintly. "I was wondering how I was to get back. I was quite sure that no one would hear me if I called, and I began to be afraid. I am in the habit of wandering about gathering botanical specimens and adding to my collection of autumn leaves, and no one knew where I was."

"I see," nodded Mark. "I feel fortunate in having come this way, if I can be of service to you. My name is Sheldon—Mark Sheldon," he added. "I am a nephew of the late Silas Barclay, and have come from my home in Chicago on business connected with my uncle's estate."

The girl bent her head in graceful acknowledgment of his introduction of himself. "Glad to make your acquaintance, Mr. Sheldon," she murmured. "As you already know my name, it seems, it would be superfluous for me to mention it." She bent and placed a slender hand upon her ankle. "It doesn't hurt much now," she said, "and if you will be so kind as to give me a little assistance I shall try to walk back to the hotel."

"With great pleasure," assured Mark, stepping quickly to her side.

She had risen and stood balancing herself on one foot. Mark took the extended hand and steadied her while she placed the injured foot forward. But as she bore her weight upon it she uttered a little gasp of pain, and must have fallen had not Mark made haste to support her.

"I'm afraid I can't walk just yet," she panted, sinking back to her seat on the flat stone.

"And you mustn't try," advised Mark. "There is no reason that you should."

"But how shall I get back to the hotel?" she asked. "No conveyance can be brought here."

"Oh, we shall overcome that," assured Mark. "It is true that no vehicle could be brought over the rough path, but I can get a horse at the stables. It will take me but a few minutes."

"But, Mr. Sheldon, I hate to put you to all this trouble," she protested.

He put up his hand with a reproving gesture. "As if it were not a pleasure," he said. "I shall be back right away, and mind, don't you try to walk while I am gone."

He went swinging up the slope with rapid strides. He had crossed the ridge and was descending into the valley beyond when he espied Bobby Quick, the 12-year-old son of the landlord of Barclay House, riding a sedate burro up the path. Mark's face brightened.

"Oh, say, Bobby, do you want to earn a dollar?" he called to the boy.

Bobby brought the burro to a stop. "Sure!" he said. "Got a job for me?"

"There's a passenger over at the spring I want you to bring over on your burro."

"All right. I'll go right now," the boy replied.

Mark tossed him a silver dollar, which he caught dexterously and dropped into his pocket. "Thank you, Mr. Sheldon," he said. "This will pay for a lot of jobs."

"Better wait till you see who your passenger is," advised Mark, smiling. "It might be a giant!"

"Bruno can carry a giant all right, but I hain't seen any round here."

Miss Turk laughed gayly when she saw Mark and the boy coming with the burro.

"I don't know why I didn't think about Bobby and Bruno at first," she said. "That solves the whole problem. I know Bruno will not throw me off nor fall going up the steep path."

"Good gracious! Is it you that has to be brought?" cried Bobby, in surprise. "What's happened?"

"Sprained my ankle a little," she said.

The boy turned to Mark.

"Say, Mr. Sheldon, why didn't you tell me who it was that needed me and Bruno? I ain't goin' to take no dollar fer bringin' her!"

"That's why I paid you in advance," laughed Mark, "and now you can't back out."

The burro was led up to the spot where Miss Turk was seated, and Mark assisted her to mount.

"Why, this is fine!" cried the girl, as Bruno started with her up the steep, winding path. "I suppose I'll have to take Bobby and Bruno with me when I go into the hills again."

Bobby led Bruno, while Mark walked close to the animal's side, ready to give assistance if it should be necessary. But he quickly saw that the girl needed no assistance, for she rode blithely up the steep hill, smiling at Mark's concern for her safety, and allowed Bruno to carry her down the slope to the hotel at a brisk trot.

Mark was much impressed with the picture she made, and he felt convinced that if riding a burro invested all women with such a charm, the demand for burros would soon be prodigious. The same idea must have occurred to Bobby, who gazed at the combination with undisguised admiration.

"Say, Miss Turk," he cried, "Bruno makes you look mighty stunning!"

Probably he did not express himself just as he had intended, but when he saw the girl throw back her head and laugh with such hearty abandon that even the sober-faced Mark was compelled to join in her mirth, Bobby wondered what he could have said to cause so much amusement.

As Mark Sheldon assisted Katharine Turk from the back of Bruno to a hammock on the porch, her slim white hand lay for a moment in his, and as it was withdrawn a ring slipped from her finger and fell at his feet. As he stooped to pick it up his eyes rested for a moment on the little circlet of gold. For a moment he found himself staring at it in an amazed, helpless way. Like one dazed he dropped it into her palm, but the vision of it still lingered vividly in his brain. As if etched on his brain, he could still see the band of gold with the two golden hearts broken in the center, and the two words engraved on the inside: "US PART!" He was thinking of the other part of the broken double ring in his pocket—the one found among the effects of the murdered Basil Smoot, with its "TILL DEATH!"

"TILL DEATH US PART!" The words rang thru his brain. The inscription on the ring worn by Miss Turk was the missing half of the one brought to the hotel by the man who now lay dead—murdered by an unknown hand!

Mark Sheldon, long after he had left the girl's side, sat on the veranda, his mind grappling vaguely with the mystery of this amazing discovery. The rings with their broken hearts and inscription that now read like the prophecy of a tragedy, had with malignant jugglery linked the name of Katharine Turk with that of the strange man who now lay dead in the silent room below—dead by the hand of a murderer!

Who had committed the deed? What had brought Basil Smoot to Barclay House? Who could have had any motive in committing the shocking crime? No one at the hotel seemed to have known him. The motive for the deed was not robbery! Was it revenge? Impossible!

For a long time Mark sat smoking and running the matter over in his mind. For once in his life he was baffled. And when the rings with their broken hearts and tragic inscription again swam before his mental vision, and thru the shadow of it, with the great gray eyes fixed upon him, was the face of Katharine Turk.

He rose from his chair, paced back and forth for a moment, and then descending the stairs, entered the office.

He opened the register, and turning the leaves slowly, glanced keenly at the pages. Presently his eyes encountered a smudge of gray ashes. Then he paused and bent closer. He let his eyes rest on the page. There were many names there, but only one riveted his attention. That was "Katharine Turk!"

And it was to this page that Basil Smoot had turned but a few hours before he was murdered in his room!

This mysterious story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Umbrellas.

"One day last summer," remarked the professor, "I got caught in the rain. Luckily there were umbrellas for sale right in the store where I sought refuge. I selected one for seventy-five cents, thinking that would be the best investment. It would get me home, anyway, and that was all I wanted. I didn't need an umbrella especially.

"It chanced to be a sort of 'press the button—it does the rest' umbrella. All I had to do was to press the button in the handle and up it flew, all ready to keep the rain off!

"I touched the button in accordance with the clerk's directions and the umbrella flew up and I walked out to take my car. There was quite a shower in progress. When the car stopped and I started to get aboard, I discovered that I couldn't pull the umbrella down. The clerk hadn't shown me how to pull the thing down and I was not much interested in that part of the process at the store, altho I was painfully interested now. I could see no more buttons anywhere to press. The conductor clanged the bell, and some of the passengers who were anxious to get home to dinner suggested that I take the next car, which would be along about the time I worked out the umbrella puzzle.

"I simply couldn't get that umbrella lowered. That was all there was to it! I paid my fare and held the umbrella out behind the car. When I got home I left it on the front porch, still up.

"Presently a gale of wind came along. Hearing a flutter, I looked out of the window just in time to see my umbrella borne by the wind to the roof of the house. Finally it settled on top of the chimney and shut off the draft, so that the house filled with smoke and nearly burned down while I was getting a ladder and climbing up after the umbrella.

"I paid a dollar for the next umbrella I bought. It was raised by hand only. In this respect it was satisfactory, but it had a way coming down impromptu. It took the most inopportune moments for coming down, usually when it was raining like sixty and my hands were full of parcels. At such times it would come down so suddenly and unexpectedly that it would surprise a wooden Indian or provoke even one of those amiable clothing store dummies to loud and ungentlemanly expressions.

"That umbrella I took over to the Y. M. C. A. and left there.

"Next I bought a three-dollar umbrella. It was so arranged that it could go neither up nor down impromptu. It would stay up or down until its position was changed by the operator. I took much delight in operating this one, but it quit raining the minute I bought it. Each morning when I arose it would be as clear as a bell, and I would leave my umbrella at home. That night I would come home in the rain.

"All things considered, there is small satisfaction in umbrellas."

* * *

Silenced Them.

A novelist recently found himself in a train with two talkative women. Having recognized him from his published portraits, they opened fire upon him in regard to his novels, praising them in a manner which was unendurable to the sensitive author.

Presently the train entered a tunnel, and in the darkness the novelist raised the back of his hand to his lips and kissed it soundly. When light returned he found the two women regarding one another in icy silence.

Addressing them with great suavity, he said:

"Ah, ladies, the one regret of my life will be that I shall never know which of you it was that kissed me!"

At latest accounts the ladies had not yet spoken to each other.

* * *

THE FIRST TASTE

Learned to Drink Coffee When a Boy.

If parents realized the fact that coffee contains a drug—caffeine—which is especially harmful to children, they would doubtless hesitate before giving them coffee to drink.

"When I was a child in my mother's arms and first began to nibble things at the table, Mother used to give me sips of coffee. And so I contracted the coffee habit early.

"I continued to use coffee until I was 27, and when I got into office work I began to have nervous spells. Especially after breakfast I was so nervous I could scarcely attend to my correspondence.

"At night, after having had coffee for supper, I could hardly sleep, and on rising in the morning would feel weak and nervous.

"A friend persuaded me to try Postum.

"I can now get good sleep, am free from nervousness and headaches. I recommend Postum to all coffee drinkers."

Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Postum comes in two forms:

Postum Cereal—the original form—must be well boiled. 15c and 25c packages.

Instant Postum—a soluble powder—dissolves quickly in a cup of hot water, and, with cream and sugar, makes a delicious beverage **instantly**. 30c and 50c tins.

Both forms are equally delicious and cost about the same per cup.

"There's a Reason" for Postum.

—sold by Grocers.

UNDER THE LASH

By Hapsburg Liebe

ON THE mountainside, a few hundred yards above the pale little city of crudely-lettered slatestones, Bill Slagle watched the people of the Big Laurel as they reverently and tenderly put banks and shocks and sheaves of white and purple flowers on the narrow ridge that covered all that was left of Henry Henry, the best loved man on the mountain and a man Bill Slagle had hated bitterly. A strange, new feeling was tearing at Bill Slagle's soul, lashing it, scourging it. When the inevitable came to him, would those banks and shocks and sheaves be his? They would not!

For Bill Slagle, young black-bearded giant of a mountaineer, of terrible and uncontrollable temper, was loved by none. He was among his people a savage, tyrant king. To see him was to be afraid—afraid of the piercing of his deep, black eyes; of the sound of his voice; of the grip of his great hands; of the heavy, quick tread of his feet. He could have broken the body of the ordinary man across his knee with ease. He had never carried the whipping, nor the dare, nor the insult, of any man on earth. Still—when the inevitable came to him, would those banks and shocks and sheaves be his? They certainly would not!

For the first time in his life, he was beset by a great and overmastering loneliness and sense of loss.

Then the strange, new feeling gave way to a powerful, primitive, jealous wrath. His huge figure quivered with it. His hands clinched upon the barrel of his rifle as tho they would crush the wood into the steel. His jaw muscles stood out tense behind his beard. He took his gaze from the mourners below, who were turning from the pale little city, and looked up the crooked path behind him.

Coming hurriedly down the path was a freckled, poorly clothed, barefoot boy of 8, Littlejohn Dorsett, only child of Sarah Dorsett, a plump and pretty young widow; and in one hand he carried a bunch of withering wild violets.

Slagle stepped squarely before the little fellow. "Hi, thar, son!" he bellowed, in wanton defiance of he knew not just what.

The boy stopped suddenly and caught his breath. His freckles stood out clearer because of the pallor that had come at the sound of the terrible voice. He trembled from head to toe, and turned his gaze downward.

"I'm already late," he chattered. "I had to go plumb down thar at Tom Higgins' creek to git these hyur vi'lets. Please le' me go on!"

"Gi' me them thar flowers hyur!" snorted the giant mountaineer.

The boy held the withered violets out for Slagle to take. Slagle took them roughly and with a sneer.

"I wanted to take 'em down thar," quavered the widow's son, pointing a little sunburned finger.

"Hain't he done had enough?" clipped Slagle. "'Pears to me, like he has, ey gad! Looka down thar—'s a wagonload, ey gad! Hain't he done had enough?"

Littlejohn Dorsett straightened angrily. "No!" quickly, tremulously. "No! He went ragged and hungry to help the pore. Sech a feller as him cain't never have enough!"

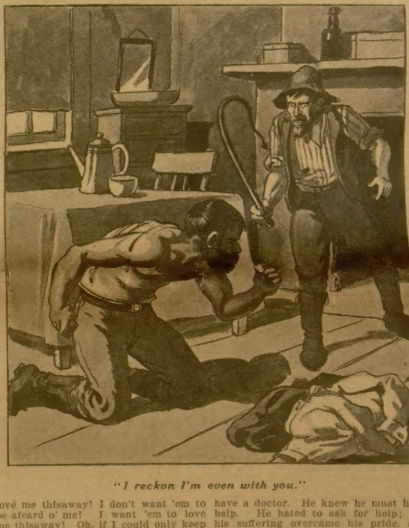
With that the widow's son turned, afraid for himself for that which he had said to the man of the savage temper, and fled homeward. Slagle watched the little figure until it was lost in a bend in the path, and there was a new light in his black eyes. He wished the boy had not gone. He wished the boy had cursed him for the brute that he was. He ran after Littlejohn, calling lustily. There was no answer. The sound of his voice had only caused Littlejohn to run the faster.

Slagle stopped still, looked toward the withered flowers in his hand, and forced himself to laugh at his weakness. He threw the violets to the ground, and stood looking down at them. Then he stooped, gathered them up, walked down to the last resting-place of poor Henry Henry, and threw them down again. He turned away, stopped, faced about, knelt, picked up every one of the little flowers, and put them tenderly and blindly over the still, beloved heart.

He sat there in the silence until night had come, thinking, thinking about his great loneliness and his sense of loss.

There was the sound of bare feet in the leaves somewhere out to his left. He knew it was the widow's son, come to add his little mite to the glory of the fallen. He lay very close to the earth, that he might not be seen. He saw the dim little shape kneel and lay a small, dark blot against the snowy white of the laurel bloom; then he saw the dim little shape rise and walk slowly back into the black shades of the woodland.

When the patter of the boy's footsteps had died away and the night had become still again, the lashing in Bill Slagle's soul broke out in a low, heart-broken speech:



"I reckon I'm even with you."

"Oh, God 'lmighty, if somebody'd only love me thisaway! I don't want 'em to be afeard o' me! I want 'em to love me thisaway! Oh, if I could only keep my devilish temper down whar it b'longs! If I jest could!"

A little animal walked softly past him and stretched itself out beside the flower-covered ridge. He knew it was Henry Henry's dog, oblivious of all things save its sorrow, faithful unto the end, come to be by its master until death relieved it of its last duty. For an instant he wondered, in his uncouth, primitive way, why Heaven permitted the pitiful, world-wide tragedy of animal life without recompense; then the lashing within him burst into words again:

'If even a dawg'd love me thisaway!"

He had had dogs, more than one. But he had killed them all with his bare hands, in demoniacal fits of anger.

Some time later, Bill Slagle rose and turned homeward. He groped his way thru the woodland, and found the path. And then something happened——

At the point in the path at which he had stopped Littlejohn Dorsett, his powderhorn caught on an outstretched laurel branch; and the strap, worn thin at the shoulder, broke in twain. He set the butt of his rifle on the ground and knelt. The night was so thick that he could see nothing. He scratched a match, and held it close to the ground; there was a quick sputter and a quicker flash—for the peg had been knocked from the end of the horn, and there had been a short train of powder leading into the rest—and Bill Slagle shot to his full height with a guttural cry of intense pain.

He could see nothing at all! The dim stars were gone. The black outlines of the trees were gone. Everything was gone from his sight. He sank to his knees, his hands held close to his burned eyes, and cried piteously:

"Blind! I'm blind—blind!"

He began to crawl up the narrow trail on his hands and knees, suffering great agonies. He felt his way to the crest of the mountain, and turned down the other side toward the little cabin in which he had lived alone, save for a fiddle, for years.

When he came to a bypath that led up to his right, he stopped. He was but a short distance from the home of the Widow Dorsett. He knew he must have a doctor. He knew he must have help. He hated to ask for help; but his suffering overcame his pride, and he turned up the bypath and followed it to the cabin. He pushed the door open, and crawled across the threshold.

"Bill Slagle!" came a shrill and much frightened voice; and Bill Slagle could tell by the sound of it that Sarah Dorsett was backing from him.

"Have pity!" begged the giant, huskily. He sat back on his heels and stretched his quivering, earth-stained hands toward the woman. "Have pity on me, Sary! You needn't to be afeard o' me no more. Nobody needn't to be afeard o' me no more. My eyes is both burnt out, and I'm as blind as a rock. Sary, in God's name I ax you, have pity on me now! Send yore little boy down to the creek at the foot o' the mountain, and to that thar campin' party thar for a doctor. Thar's a doctor amongst 'em. I know him. Maybe he can ease this hyur awful, awful hurtin' for me. Sary, have pity on me now!"

His pleading stirred a great compassion in the kind heart of the pretty little widow. There were tears in her sweet brown eyes as she helped him to the only bed in the house. Then she ran down the trail, hallooed at a cabin, and sent a messenger for the doctor who was with the camping party. When she returned she saw with regret that there was nothing she could do for the injured man, who lay tossing from side to side in pain, holding his teeth shut tightly and striving not to make an unmanly show of himself.

Suddenly Bill Slagle turned his scorched and unseeing eyes toward the pair at his bedside. He beckoned jerkily.

"Son," he begged, "come hyur. Don't be afeard o' me. Come hyur jest a minute. Please!"

"Go to him, Littlejohn," urged the mother's gentle voice.

Slagle felt the near presence of the boy. He felt the glorious sweetness of it in spite of his misery. Somehow it seemed connected with the heartbroken cry that had burst from his soul over in the pale city. He felt for the little hand, the same little hand that had given him the withered violets a few hours before, and found it.

"Son," he muttered, "I want to ax you to forgive me for a-takin' yore flowers from you. It was lowdown mean in me to do it. When I seen how much everybody loved pore Henry Henry, it made me plumb wild. I was mad acause everybody was afeard o' me, and didn't like me none at all—even tho it was my own fault. That's what made me do it, son. And, son, I want to tell you this—that I went down thar and put the vi'lets whar you yoreself meant to put 'em. Now, say you hain't got nothin' ag'inst me, or I jest don't think I can stand it. Please! Say it!"

"Say it, Littlejohn," echoed Sarah Dorsett.

"Shore," said the boy, heartily.

"Much obliged, son," gasped the suffering giant. He clasped his hands, wrung them nervously, shut his teeth together tightly, and was silent.

The doctor came. He thrust a needle into Bill Slagle's arm, and the big mountaineer began to feel easier. Then, with the woman's help, the doctor went to work.

At daybreak Slagle put forth a hand and took the physician by the shoulder.

"Doc," he muttered, "I want to know the truth. I'm man enough to take it. Am I ever to see any more, or am I not to see any more." With a curved forefinger he pointed to the bandage over his eyes.

"I'm afraid not," was the slow, regretful answer.

"And will I be disfiggered much about the face?"

"You will be disfigured very little, my friend. It looks like a blow from Fate. Almost the entire force of the explosion struck your eyes. Your beard is burned but little."

One of Slagle's hands went toward a trousers pocket. "How much do I owe you, Doc?"

The doctor laughed a little. "Nothing, my dear fellow!" he said kindly. "You didn't let us pay you for acting as guide on those trips to the Balsam and the White Rock; surely I ought to be willing to do something for you."

"Shore am much obliged, Doc," murmured Slagle. He went on, "And cain't I be led home today? These hyur folks cain't afford to be bothered with me, y'know, Doc!"

"Not today," declared the physician. "Tomorrow, perhaps. I'm sure Mrs. Dorsett will keep you until tomorrow. Eh, Mrs. Dorsett?"

The woman answered thoughtfully, "Yes."

The doctor turned to his medicine case. "I must go home this morning. My father is ill. I want you to come to town four days from now, Bill, and I'll take you to an eye specialist."

The doctor left bandages, medicines, and directions for their application, and went.

What a jewel is compassion! Little and mean, indeed, is the man who does not have the deepest pity for those bereft of the blessing of sight. That day there were few of the people of the Big Laurel who did not come to see poor, unmanned Bill Slagle, whom they had feared for so long. They held his hands as they sat beside his bed, and tried to cheer him in his darkness; and Bill Slagle's eyes smarted with tears much of the time.

At twilight of this happy day, when the visitors had all gone to their homes, Slagle called to the little widow. She came, and sat down beside him.

"Sary," he whispered, with a great deal of feeling. "I—I'm durn nigh glad I'm blind!"

"You'd ortn't to talk thataway," chided Sarah Dorsett.

"But I am!" cried Slagle. "But I'm shore sorry I cain't never git out and work no more. Mean as I was, Sary, I always did like to work. And to show for it, I've got mighty nigh a hunderd dollars saved up and hid away. Then thar's another thing, Sary, I reckon." His voice fell into a whisper again. "Sary, you're one o' God 'lmighty's own wimmen. If I had my eyes, I'd do all I could to git you to marry me and let me work for you and the boy!"

Sarah Dorsett blushed, but Slagle couldn't see it. She made no reply to his declaration of affection.

After a little period of silence, Slagle muttered half-heartedly: "I beg yore pardon, Sary."

"It's all right, Bill," replied the widow. "When yore savin's is all gone, what're you a-goin' to do for a livin'?"

"Be durned if I know!" He caressed the bandage with a careful hand. "'Bout the only thing I can do, I reckon, is to fiddle. I can fiddle in the dark. I'm used to that. A-fiddlin' has been the only way I had o' passin' off the long, lonesome evenin's. You know I hain't—hain't never had no friends."

"Folks'd pay you for a fiddlin' at their dances, if you jest had somebody to lead you thar and back," mused Mrs. Dorsett.

"Yes," agreed Slagle.

A childish voice piped from the foot of the bed: "What's the matter o' me a-leadin' him to the dances, nohow?"

"You cain't leave yore mother at night," objected Slagle.

"I could spare him some o' the time, I reckon, Bill," said Mrs. Dorsett.

"Ey gad, ma'am," smiled the big mountaineer, "I'm much obliged, shore. But we'll let the thing rest right whar it's at for a while. Here's a little proposition I've got to make to you, Sary—a plain, bizness proposition: Send me my meals by Littlejohn, and I'll pay for what we all eat. Eh?"

"That wouldn't be fair to you, Bill," declared the widow. "The only arrangement you can make 'ith me is to let me send you yore meals, and pay for 'em what they cost afore they're cooked. I'd reelly like to do better'n that, Bill, but I'm as pore as Job's turkey."

"Sary," he groped for her hand, and she let him hold it for one brief moment. "Sary, you're the best woman in the world!"

The next morning the Dorsetts led Bill Slagle to his little lonesome cabin, and left him there. A few hours later, Sarah Dorsett and her boy came down to dress the giant's eyes, as the doctor had directed. Littlejohn brought fresh water from the spring and built a fire; his mother mixed a healing lotion, and watched the kettle. When the water had boiled she allowed it to cool down; then she went to work, and she was as careful with the burned parts as if they belonged to her own Littlejohn himself.

"Now, Bill," she said, when the bathing was done, "jest take a little peep and see if you can see."

Slagle opened his eyes, and closed them quickly. The light hurt them—but he could see! The doctor had been mistaken. A thrill had ran thru the big mountain man's whole being. Then he thought—if he let it be known that he wasn't blind, people would be afraid of him; they wouldn't come to see him—they would steer clear of him, because of his savage temper, as before! And the little widow—she, too, perhaps, would be afraid of him; and he had come to love her with all the strength of his fiery heart, and he couldn't have her fear him! And there was the blessed boy, Littlejohn—Littlejohn would not be permitted to come near him! In Bill Slagle's heart the boy held a place second only to that of his mother.

He must practice a deception for a little while, anyway. He could not give up these sweet things—not yet, not yet.

"Bill," came the woman's voice, "did you seen anything at all?"

Bill Slagle had been a truthful man all his life. His spirit writhed within him as he answered:

"Nothin' at all. Not a darned thing. Sary, the doctor he was right. He was shore right."

"Maybe when you go to town——" began the widow, when her patient interrupted:

"I hain't a goin' to town. It hain't no use. It'd bother somebody to take me down thar, and it wouldn't do no good. I hain't a-goin'."

A week went by. Bill Slagle had spent the time in fiddling and in talking with the people of the Big Laurel, who had faithfully come to see him and to offer comfort at every opportunity. He had taken the useless bandage away; it had become unbearable, and, besides, it was not very hard to keep his eyes closed when visitors were there. And each time Mrs. Dorsett sent or brought food for him, he would swear inwardly at himself for the imposition she was suffering at his hands—but he couldn't give up the blessings blindness had brought him, not yet!

A few days later he was forced to admit that the deception must be brought to an end. He must go about as a man with two good eyes, and the willingness to bear the burdens of such a man. He believed that he could master himself now.

But how was he to convince the people that he could be master of himself? He had lorded it over them too long for it to be an easy thing to do. If some one would only pick a quarrel with him, he told himself, he would gladly take a sound beating to prove that he was no more the savage and the tyrant of the other days. But he knew that, once it became known that he could see, nobody would care to pick a quarrel with him.

Late that afternoon, just as the golden summer sun was reaching for the fringe of pines that stood along the crest of the next mountain to the westward, Dan'l Ferguson came. Dan'l Ferguson was a man whom Bill Slagle had whipped a dozen times on general principles. Ferguson was almost as big and as strong as Slagle; but he was a cur, where Slagle was a lion. Ferguson had dull-red hair and beard, shifting eyes, the hands of a strangler.

Slagle was sitting in the doorway, fiddling—his visitors of the day had gone, and he was lonely—when Ferguson walked up to the gate. He knew that Ferguson had come for no good. He closed his eyes, rose, felt his way to the bed, and put down the fiddle and the bow. As he turned back toward the doorway, a thrilling thought entered his mind—now was his time to prove to the people of the Big Laurel that he could govern himself, by taking a beating from his latest visitor! He groped for the door-casing, found it, and put one hand behind an ear.

"Is that you, Tom Galloway?" he called quite innocently.

Thru the slits between his sore eyelids, he watched Ferguson closely. Ferguson approached slowly, looking hard, because he wished to make doubly sure that the lion was blind. Slagle felt for a chair, and dragged it up invitingly.

"Come in, Tom," he smiled, "and set down, and talk to me. I was jest a-hopin' 'at somebody'd come to see me, acause I'm that lonesome. I ain't used to the dark, Tom."

Ferguson's dull-red beard and mustache parted in a wicked smile, which showed two rows of big, tobacco-stained teeth that seemed most vicious. Then Ferguson drew from his pocket that king of all whips, the "blacksnake," gripped its handle, and flung out the lash.

Slagle swallowed hard. The supreme test had come. He must allow himself to be whipped unmercifully by this scum, this outcast, this degenerate, a man without a single good quality, to prove to the people of the Big Laurel that he was master of himself! How he wished that he might seize the brute, crush him to the floor, and stamp the tobacco-stained teeth down his throat! Or break his body across his knee! It was by the greatest effort of his life that he held himself in leash, and appeared not to be cognizant of the identity of the man.

Ferguson did not care to keep his identity a secret. That his vengeance might be flawless, Slagle must know who gave him the terrible lashing that was to come. He would leave the vicinity as soon as his triumph was complete; he would have an hour's start, at least, and that would serve.

He stepped across the threshold, put both hands on Slagle's broad chest, and gave him a push that sent him staggering halfway to the other side of the room.

"Ey God, Bill Slagle," he gritted fiendishly, "I don't never forgit what any man does to me! I've come to pay you back, and I'm shore a-goin' to do it up handsome. Hoss off yore coat, if you want to save it—if you don't I'll tear it offen yore back. Hoss off that coat, quick now, you yeller dawg!"

Slagle was as white as death. He had great difficulty in keeping his eyes closed. With an awkward jerk, he removed his coat, and flung it to the floor.

"I'm in yore hands, Dan'l," he said hoarsely. "I'm at yore marcy. What now?"

"Yore shirt next—shed 'er!" Ferguson ordered villainously. "If you don't take it off I'll tear it off."

Bill Slagle shut his teeth together, steeled himself for the trial that was bitterer than death, and drew off his faded calico shirt. He was now stripped to the waist. His admirable physique failed to elicit anything but a sneer.

"Git down on yore knees to me, you yeller dawg!" roared Ferguson, taking a fresh grip on the iron-handled whip, his shifting light-blue eyes gloating in anticipation of the most ignoble victory any man of earth ever won. "Git down, I say!"

Slagle's great, strong hands tried hard to fly at the throat of the inhuman Ferguson; but Slagle clasped them together and held them. With a choking sob, he knelt, his eyes, now open wide, staring unseeing toward the floor.

"Now what, Dan'l?"

"This, ey God!" screeched Ferguson.

He raised the blacksnake whip and brought it whistling down to the giant's magnificent bare back. It left a crimson streak as wide as its length and two feet in length. "This! This! This! How's that, Bill Slagle—and this!"

Again and again and yet again fell the lash. Bill Slagle, still as a kneeling figure in stone, felt the warm blood trickling down to his belt. His teeth were set; his eyes shone with the terrible pain the whip brought as it bit into his white flesh like the fangs of a wolf. Again and again and yet again fell the lash. And Bill Slagle, whispering God's name under his breath, bore it all without an outcry. Even when Dan'l Ferguson wet the whip and dragged it thru the dead ashes of the fireplace, Bill Slagle did not protest. He was proving that he was master of himself.

Ferguson desisted only when the lash had broken near the handle. Panting, his light-blue eyes glowing and hot, he backed away and surveyed his victim with inhuman satisfaction.

"Thar now!" he sneered. "Thar now!"

"Heaven bless you, Dan'l Ferguson," muttered Slagle, hoarsely, weakly.

"Huh-huh!" laughed Ferguson.

Slagle's hands found the edge of the crude table, and gripped it with their waning strength. He drew himself slowly to his feet, and it was all he could do to stand. But he had won the victory. He had won a greater victory than his persecutor had won.

With his eyes half opened, he saw Ferguson take the old fiddle from the bed, raise it, dash it to the floor, shattering it beyond any repair. He bit his nether lip—for that fiddle had been to him friend and companion during the long, lonely years of his selfish, savage life. But even at this foul treatment of the world's sweetest instrument, he did not utter a word.

Ferguson was not yet done. How mean, how vile, was that man! He destroyed every breakable thing in the cabin, then set fire to the cabin itself.

"I reckon I'm even with you at last, you yeller dawg!" he jubilated, his voice strangely like the crackling of the flames among the dry pine rafters. With the air of one who seeks to do a favor, he took Slagle by an arm. "Come on, and I'll lead you out o' the house."

"Never mind, Dan'l," replied Slagle, calmly, his eyes opened wide and accusing. "I can see as well as you can. I don't want you to touch me any more."

Ferguson stared and backed away, gibbering, white with fear. He broke madly out at the doorway.

Slagle went to the lower edge of the cabin yard, staggering. He reached a tree, and sank down behind it, exhausted. In a dazed way he knew that people were gathering, and that they were all asking questions. He did not wish to answer the questions, for he

(Continued on Page Twenty-One.)

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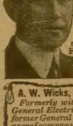

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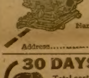

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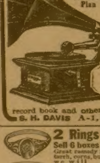

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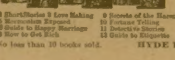

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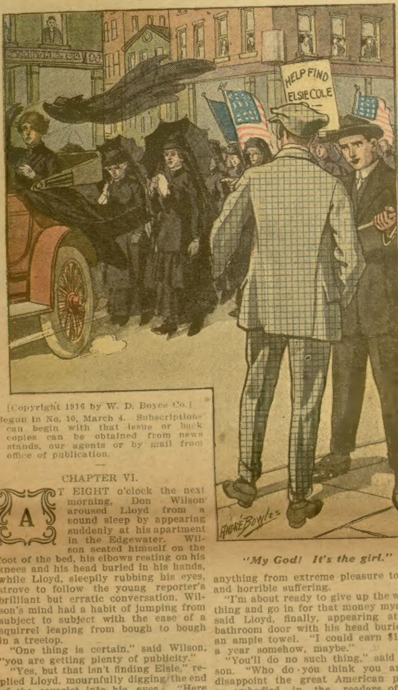

"My God! It's the girl."

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CHAPTER VI.

AT EIGHT o'clock the next morning, Don Wilson aroused Lloyd from a sound sleep by appearing suddenly at his apartment in the Edgewater. Wilson seated himself on the foot of the bed, his elbows resting on his knees and his head buried in his hands, while Lloyd, sleepily rubbing his eyes, strove to follow the young reporter's brilliant but erratic conversation. Wilson's mind had a habit of jumping from subject to subject with the ease of a squirrel leaping from bough to bough in a treetop.

"One thing is certain," said Wilson, "you are getting plenty of publicity."

"Yes, but that isn't finding Elsie," replied Lloyd, mournfully digging the end of the coverlet into his eyes. "Here every paper in New York devotes columns of reading matter and hundreds of inches of space to every conceivable kind of cut that might attract her attention, and the best we get is a pleasant smile, figuratively speaking, from an unknown young woman who, evidently, is making fun of us."

Wilson carefully removed his eyeglasses and wiped the lenses on the sheet, after which he absent-mindedly began to polish his shoes with the soft blanket.

"What's the answer?" he asked finally.

"The answer is we're a couple of darned fools," mumbled Lloyd, scrambling out of the bed, and making a headlong rush for the bathroom.

The next moment came a gurgling cry as the cold water of a shower struck him in the back, and his succeeding words came interspersed with ejaculations that might have meant anything from extreme pleasure to dire and horrible suffering.

"I'm about ready to give up the whole thing and go in for that money myself," said Lloyd, finally, appearing at the bathroom door with his head buried in an ample towel. "I could earn $15,000 a year somehow, maybe."

"You'll do no such thing," said Wilson. "Who do you think you are to disappoint the great American public as embodied in the readers of The World. Why, man, they won't let you quit even tho you threaten it. You've got to find Elsie now, if you spend every cent you have and exhaust the utter limits of my fertile brain conceiving plans to locate her."

"I wish I had your enthusiasm," groaned Lloyd. "Wait until you've kept up the search for two years, as I've done."

"That has nothing to do with the case," Wilson declared vehemently. "I'm in for the greatest story little old New York has had in a decade, and, by George! I'm going to get it, whether you help me or not."

Lloyd walked over to his friend and clasped his hand.

"Of course, old man," he said feelingly, "I'm not going to be a quitter. I'm going to see this thing thru to the bitter end, if only for your sake. If it hadn't been for you I wouldn't have had a chance."

"And now that you've found me, you have about one chance in a million," said Wilson, whimsically. "Anyway, we'll take that chance. What are the papers saying this morning?"

Together the two friends spread the morning papers which Wilson had brought with him over the bed and buried their heads in them.

"The World is printing a full account of the dinner last night, with a picture of the freaks," laughed Wilson. "There are pictures of the tables with the bearded lady at the place reserved for our expected but mysterious guest, and all the rest of them, including your own handsome face."

"I've no doubt that it will help my dignified professional life immensely in the future to be remembered as the man who promoted a crazy dinner for the dog-faced boy and the pin-headed baby-doll from Timbuctoo," Lloyd moaned. "I'll tell you, Wilson, if I ever find that girl and turn that legacy over to her, I hope to Heaven I'll never hear or see her again as long as I live."

"Where's your romantic spirit?" chaffed Wilson. "The proper caper would be to find the heiress, turn over the money, and then marry her, thus bringing about the happy ending and, at the same time, winning the girl and getting the money."

"God forbid!" said Lloyd, fervently, as Wilson laughingly discarded The World and took up the morning edition of The Herald. The next moment the newspaper man whistled, and leaned over the outspread sheet interestedly.

"Holy Smoke, look at that!" he exclaimed. "The department stores are featuring 'Mysterious Elsie Silks' and 'Mysterious Elsie Hats' and 'Mysterious Elsie Cloaks.' And look there! Hudnut has the 'Elsie Slippers' at his shoe store, and the perfumers advertise nothing but the 'Elsie' toilet accessories. Why, man, the paper's full of it!"

"Yes," grumbled Lloyd, "but that isn't finding the girl."

"It isn't, eh?" shouted Wilson. "Look at this! The Herald is offering $500 reward for the person who discloses the whereabouts of the missing heiress. The offer holds good for a month. They're running it as a circulation scheme. All you have to do is to clip a coupon and send it with a statement of the girl's supposed whereabouts, and if you win you get $500. Man, there'll be a million people in New York looking for Elsie Cole before night."

The possibilities of the plan struck Lloyd suddenly, and his apathy was thrown off like a coat.

"That's right," he exclaimed, enthusiastically. "A million! There'll be two million if there'll be a soul—men, women and children."

He began to dress himself hurriedly, talking in the meantime in a steady stream.

"That's the greatest scheme of all, Don. Why the deuce didn't you think of it for The World? Why, it'll spread all over the State. All the little towns with mysterious young ladies in them will have to disgorge their secrets. If there's a single photograph sent in, I'll be able to tell in a minute whether or not it's my cousin. There's a strong family resemblance, and I'm sure I would recognize her."

"I don't believe you would," mused Wilson, half to himself, as he let himself down from the bed and moved over to the dresser, where he exchanged his faded and somewhat stringy necktie for a new and choice one brought home the preceding night by his friend.

"Nonsense!" sneered Lloyd. "Of course I'd know her. Why not?"

"It's my personal opinion," said Wilson, "that the young lady in the red car isn't far away at any time from Miss Elsie Cole. In fact, she is Miss Elsie Cole, as you'll find out. I'd be willing to bet a month's salary against a plugged nickel that that shrewd young woman believes you to be some sort of a faker who is after her fortune, and she has determined to beat you to it. Playing the role of Elsie Cole's friend is part of her game."

The sharp insistent ring of the telephone broke into his words. The reporter stepped hastily to the 'phone, where he took off the receiver and answered the call.

"Mr. Lloyd?" he queried. He put his hand over the receiver and turned to Jack. "Home?"

"Who is it?"

Wilson repeated the question thru the 'phone. In answer to the reply, he said:

"Of course if it is so important, he'll speak to you. Just a moment."

The next moment Lloyd was at the 'phone, where an excited, high-pitched voice greeted him.

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distance, came a peculiar cry. It sounded as if some old man was attempting feebly to express himself. Then came the girl's voice again, hurriedly.

"Oh, Mr. Lloyd, I must see you at once. This has gone far enough. Come to me quickly. This is Elsie Cole speaking—your Cousin Elsie."

The voice was suddenly silenced by another stronger and more masculine voice, demanding peremptorily that the girl cease speaking. There was the faintly discerned sound of a struggle, and a woman's scream, then the clatter of the receiver as it struck the side of the 'phone. The next moment the line was disconnected and Jack Lloyd, pale and unstrung, was making desperate but fruitless efforts to have the connection replaced.

CHAPTER VII.

THE young attorney turned to Wilson with a look of utter despair in his face.

"What's the use?" he asked. "There's a combination against us we don't seem to be able to break. It it wasn't for the downright shame of being called a 'quitter' I'd throw up the sponge. As it is, I'm sure that some dirty work is on foot, and I'm determined to save my cousin, no matter what the cost."

Wilson was smoking in silence and letting Lloyd run on unquestioned. When his friend ceased, the reporter spoke. As usual, his mind had been looking for the practical way.

"Who was that at the 'phone?" he wanted to know.

"It was Elsie. She got that much out and was begging me to come to her, when she was cut off. I heard a man's voice and a woman's scream, then the line was cut. I wonder——"

He broke off suddenly, and his face took on a determined look.

"If they are making that girl suffer thru no fault of her own, and only because I want to get her that money, by Heaven, they'll pay for it no matter who they are!"

Wilson smacked himself on the leg. "That's the talk, old sport! Come on."

They were off to the police station, where Wilson's card secured them almost immediate audience with the chief of police. As soon as he learned what they wanted, he sent for the chief of detectives.

"We've got to find this girl and that quickly," he said to his subordinate, as the detective chief heard the end of Lloyd's remarkable narrative of the voice over the 'phone.

"Of course, but how?" asked Cooley, *the detective.*

"Get every man on your staff thoroly worked into this case," answered Chief Crawdon. "Understand, I don't want any phony work, I want results. Every newspaper in town will be watching, and they won't be satisfied with excuses. We must produce this missing Elsie Cole, or there'll be some vacancies in the force."

"Just as a little tip to you, chief," said Wilson, "I have a suggestion to make to my paper, and I think there'll be a substantial reward offered to the man that brings in the girl. A word to the wise ought to be a plenty."

"I got you," said the chief, and turned to Cooley. "Get 'em out now, Cooley, and don't loaf on the job. I want this town combed with a fine-tooth comb. We've got to have that girl, dead or alive."

"All right, chief," Cooley replied, as he went to the door. "We'll see about it."

"See about hell!" Crawdon replied profanely. "Bring her in, that's all."

"That'll do for the coppers for the nonce," said Wilson, as he and Lloyd went down the great stone steps leading from the station. "Now the thing to do is to get to the telephone company and see if we can trace that call."

Fortunately Wilson had put down the hour the call had come into Lloyd's room, so they had at least something definite to put up to the manager of the company when they reached his office.

The manager was all politeness when he heard the nature of their call, altho he was frank to tell them in the beginning there was very little hope for success. He had read the papers about the missing heiress, he said, and had put the whole thing down to some clever advertising, but now that he knew that Lloyd was serious in his intention of finding the girl to turn over her legacy to her, he was anxious to do whatever he could to aid in the search. He asked the young men to return that afternoon after he had spent some time in investigating the source of the call.

When Lloyd and Wilson returned to the manager's office, that official met them with a sheaf of papers in his hand which bore evidence to the thoroness of the search. They had traced the call, he said, as coming from the Ludlow station, but beyond that they had followed every clew without results.

"Did you find the girl?" asked Wilson, meaning the girl who had made the switchboard connection.

"That's the odd part of the whole thing," the manager replied. "We are sure the call came thru Miss Schultz, whose address is 1456 Cameron avenue, Flushing. Her 'phone number used to be Flushing 1567, but when we tried to call her up, we found the 'phone had been removed last week. The supervisor tells us, too, that Miss Schultz left our employ this afternoon, and a messenger boy to her home returned with the information that Miss Schultz formerly boarded there, but had left the house at noon, stating that she was going West that night to join her sister. She failed to give the town to which she intended moving."

"There's that combination of circumstances working against us again," said Wilson, with his whimsical smile.

"I'm very sorry, gentlemen," protested the manager, "but really I was most anxious to assist you. We have left no stone unturned, I assure you."

"Thanks," Lloyd replied. "If we hear anything, we'll let you know."

"Just a minute," Wilson interrupted. "There's a way you can help us, if you will. Funny we didn't think of it before, but it isn't too late. Lloyd here heard the girl scream over the 'phone, and there was a sound of a struggle. In the first place, there is the barest possibility that she was injured and has been taken to a hospital. Of course, the chance is slim, but nevertheless it's a chance and shouldn't be overlooked. The second thing that suggests itself is that Elsie may be confined in one of the numerous insane asylums or private hospitals for nervous complaints, while our precious friends who seem to have it in for her are busy with their plans to get the million dollars, if that's the plan. We might call up each of these places listed in the telephone book and see what the result is."

"It's a long chance, but still it's a chance," assented Lloyd, and the young men, accompanied by the obliging manager, returned to an office in the telephone building where the manager provided a special operator to hurry thru the calls. When the whole list had been exhausted, Wilson acknowledged himself stumped for the time being.

Disconsolately, the young men went out, and hailing a taxi rode in silence to Park Row. When they reached there the first edition of the morning papers was beginning to reach the street, and with the habit of his kind, Wilson called a boy and bought a World. As he opened the sheet, a whistle of surprise escaped him.

"Well, what do you think of McCoy?" he asked. "Gee! but he's spread himself on this stunt."

Looking over his shoulder Lloyd saw a whole double-page spread devoted to the mysterious Elsie Cole. The World, outstripping its competitors, was offering a reward of $5,000 flat to any one who would produce Elsie Cole, dead or alive, and no questions asked.

"I suggested that to McCoy," said Wilson, complacently, "and he's falling for the plan like a little man. If this doesn't bring Elsie, you might as well send the money to the decrepit acrobats."

"But why does he limit the time?"

"That's where the joker is," said Wilson. "Do you know the greatest detectives in New York are the newspaper reporters when they are keened to the scent and go in to win. Well, the little limit was put into the offer to get the newspaper boys on the job in a hurry and keep them hot on the chase until they had raked New York from the Battery to the Bronx. They've got just ten days to turn the trick, and I'd bet my last Lincoln penny that if Elsie Cole is in this burg we'll know where she is before the limit is up and to spare."

Two hours later, as Lloyd was snoring peacefully beside Wilson in the former's luxurious bed, the young reporter sat suddenly up in bed and awoke his friend by a resounding slap on the back.

"What the devil!" gasped Jack, coming to his senses slowly, and sleepily trying to grasp the significance of the onslaught.

"Oh, nothing, I guess," laughed Wilson. "It just occurred to me that the smartest newspaper man in New York ought to win that five thousand bones. I ought to have thought of that before. I need the money."

"Oh, go to sleep!" muttered Lloyd, reposing himself on his pillow. "You haven't got a chance in the world. You've been on the story now for three weeks, and you're about as near finding Elsie as you were at the start. Forget it!"

"That's what's going to make me win," gurgled Wilson, delightedly. "All the three-week ideas have run out and the regular ones are beginning to come. The one best little idea of the season for finding Elsie will be sprung as a starter. We'll enlist the sympathy of the women, my boy, and set them searching for their little sister in distress. Then watch them hum."

"Fine!" Jack mumbled sleepily. "How'll you do it?"

"Easiest thing you know," said Wilson. "We'll begin with the Parade of the Weeping Widows. If I'm not very much mistaken it'll turn the trick itself. What'll I do with that five thousand?"

CHAPTER VIII.

WILSON and Lloyd were on the job bright and early the following morning, wrapped in suppressed enthusiasm and silence. Even the men at the World office, chaffing Wilson about his stunts for the Mysterious Maid, received only studied and elaborate indifference from the young assistant when he stopped by the office to inform the city editor that he was working on another stunt that would mean several good stories. Lloyd, somewhat fagged from his strenuous work with his more aggressive partner, hurried along wherever Wilson suggested.

When a number of details which consumed most of the morning were completed satisfactorily to Wilson, the two young men found themselves at three in the afternoon standing, with a taxi waiting for them, at the door of Mrs. Meredith Melson's apartment in the Exmoor. Wilson's card, with The World name in the corner, brought them an immediate invitation to enter, and a few minutes later, Mrs. Melson, very fat and overdressed, hurried in and greeted them cordially.

"I'm delighted, I'm sure," said Mrs. Melson, who was president of the Woman's Equal Suffrage Society, and scented in the reporter's visit a nice piece of publicity for herself. "I was just at work on an article for a prominent magazine, but I am delighted to be of service to you."

Wilson thanked her and, with a look out of the corner of his eye to see how Mrs. Melson was taking his suggestion, began to tell her of Colin Cole and the lost heirs.

"But, my dear Mr. Wilson," she protested, after he had told of their efforts to find Elsie, "how can I help you?"

"You are the very person, Mrs. Melson, who can do most to help us," Wilson replied, with a flattering bow, which Mrs. Melson received smilingly. "We want to reach the women. It is only thru the women we can find Elsie. Think what it means to this poor girl, possibly lonely and ill in this geat city, being deprived of her great legacy simply because we are unable to find her."

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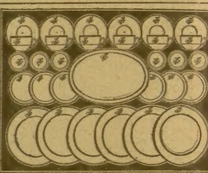

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Mrs. Melson ostensibly wiped her nose and cleared her throat. "Very sad," she murmured. "What would you suggest, Mr. Wilson?"

"Only that you get your club interested. We are going to try to interest the other clubs, and then get the associated women's clubs to act. Of course, the papers will be full of whatever we do, and the leaders of the movement will be most prominently played up. May we count on you?"

The question was superfluous. The publicity bait he held out to her did the trick. Mrs. Melson was landed and bound to be prominent in the movement. She wanted her name and picture on the front page, and if this was a chance to get them there, she determined quickly to let nothing go undone to accomplish it.

From Mrs. Melson the two young men drove out Riverside drive to the palatial residence of Mrs. Hollis McKeever. Mrs. McKeever was the undisputed social leader of New York, and just at present was specializing as president of the Women's Political Equality League. In reality Mrs. McKeever didn't care for equality with any one. She didn't want to lift others up so high, but it suited her plans to dabble in politics for the time being, and the Equality League, which she organized and of which she allowed herself to be elected president, was the result.

Incidentally, Mrs. McKeever was intensely jealous of Mrs. Melson. Outwardly the two were as cordial as two kittens over a saucer of cream, but inwardly each was planning by every means in her power to get all the cream for herself. Wilson, with the prescience of the city newspaper man, knew this and determined to use it to his advantage.

Jack Lloyd was introduced as the young lawyer whose efforts to bring about political equality were meeting with tremendous success. Wilson felt quite certain Mrs. McKeever had heard of Mr. Lloyd, and Mrs. McKeever smiled her assurance with the sang-froid of a perpetually composed superior being to whom the fame of her inferiors was both pleasing and astonishing. Later at the proper time, Wilson spoke of the enthusiasm with which Mrs. Melson had taken to the proposed enlistment of the women in Elsie's cause, and Mrs. McKeever immediately became determined that she, and not Mrs. Melson, would have the prominent direction of that praiseworthy and noble movement. Of course, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Lloyd, she said, could count on her. She would see that every woman in her club was immediately notified, and, besides, herself would enter at once into the work of inspiring them with the proper enthusiasm.

On their way down town Lloyd and Wilson stopped at an apartment in the early seventies and were ushered by a colored maid into a room that was as far from the garish display of the average New York apartment house as Broadway is from a country lane. By a wide window, thru which the afternoon sun poured in a torrent of red, sat a nice old lady knitting. She rose to meet her visitors with a stately air which reminded them distinctly of descriptions they had read of the grand dames of Colonial days.

Mrs. Van Haarden was neither very wealthy nor socially ambitious. If she followed her inclinations, she would have spent her life in quiet with her son, a practicing attorney who was politically ambitious. But despite her efforts for solitude, Mrs. Van Haarden was sought after because her views, for forty years, had been those that women everywhere were advocating now. She was virtually forced to accept the presidency of the Associated Clubs of New York State, and she dominated that body with a quiet insistence that brooked no interference and provoked immediate obedience among a somewhat turbulent membership.

As Wilson spoke feelingly of Elsie's disappearance and their search for her, the old lady's eyes filled with tears, and before he had finished she was asking how she could help him. In a few words he told her his plan, and Mrs. Van Haarden assented at once, regretting that she was too old to take a more active part in the search, but assuring the young men that she would lend her indorsement and assistance to everything they might do.

The next day Lloyd and Wilson established headquarters in a suite of rooms which the women could conveniently reach. Mrs. McKeever and Mrs. Melson reported early, flanked by their lieutenants, rosy, fresh-faced young society girls, who seemed to regard the whole proceeding as a lark, and were eagerly anxious to meet The World reporter and the handsome young lawyer.

Wilson saw that every member of every woman's club in the State received a statement of the search for Elsie and a request to appear in New York on the 10th of August to take part in a tremendous parade of the Weeping Widows, symbolical at once of the tears of women deprived of their political rights and of sorrow because Elsie Cole had not been found, and to urge every one to renewed efforts to locate her.

Several meetings at the homes of various members of the clubs were largely attended, and Wilson saw that as many women as possible got their names and pictures into the papers as sponsors for the great parade. Letter after letter was sent to clubs over the State and enthusiasm was lashed higher by a special motion picture film, depicting the efforts of Jack Lloyd to find his cousin, which was sent to the clubs for private exhibition.

Promptly at eleven o'clock on the 10th of August, ten thousand women, garbed in black, with black sunshades over them and white handkerchiefs with wide black borders held to their eyes, moved down Fifth avenue. At the head of the parade, just behind a cordon of police and a woman's band playing a dead march, rode Mrs. Van Haarden, escorted by Mrs. McKeever and Mrs. Melson. Behind them came other automobiles, all hung in dead black, and bearing sad-faced and black-garbed women. Behind the automobiles, stretched out four abreast in a curling black snake, marched the hundreds of women, lifting their mighty silence in solemn protest against man's inhumanity and in helpless appeal for a lost sister.

At Thirty-fourth street Jack Lloyd and Wilson stood watching the parade, calling each other's attention occasionally to the nimble photographers provided by the newspapers, as they skipped about trying to catch a view of some prominent woman.

"It's a peach," said Wilson, enthusiastically, for the fiftieth time, "and incidentally it's the last stunt we'll pull. If this fails, I for one will say Elsie can't be found."

"And how about your five thousand bones in that case?" asked Lloyd.

"That's it, exactly. Something gives me a hunch that this time we shan't fail. By George," he broke off suddenly, "that's incongruous to say the least. Look there! Isn't she a beauty!"

Lloyd followed the pointed finger. Out in the center of the parade, riding alone in a great car, sat a young girl. As the car passed them a blast of unexpected wind from the river caught the black drapery and blew it aside, revealing a brilliant red machine, around which a white stripe ran. At the same time the girl in the machine lowered her sunshade and made a frantic grab at her veil and hat, but the wind had been too sudden, and the hat, with the veil trailing out behind it like a burned-out comet's tail, went hurtling over the folded hood and bounded along the street.

"My God! It's the girl of the red car!" gasped Jack. "Quick, man, get to her! It's the chance we've been waiting for."

At that moment the girl turned her face full on the two young men. For a second she stared with a frightened look, then leaned over to the chauffeur and gave a quick order. The driver, without turning around, cut his car out of the procession with a practiced hand, and as the girl gathered the trailing black drapery into the car, he turned into Thirty-fourth street and sped down it toward Broadway.

At the same instant a taxi, with a wild young man shouting imprecations and directions to the driver, shot out from the sidewalk, and careening on two wheels, went tearing after the red car and the white-faced girl who sat in it.

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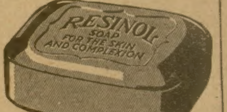
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The Castle of Lies

A Chronicle of Perils

By Arthur H. Vesey

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CHAPTER XX.

THE force of the blow had stunned me for the moment. Presently I heard Helena calling for help. I struggled to my feet and leaned gasping against the wall.

"Are you much hurt, sir?" she asked in French, in a cool, matter-of-fact voice. She had not recognized me in the semi-gloom.

"I am not hurt at all," I replied in English. "But I am sorry, Miss Brett, that that villain has made his escape."

"I fancy I heard some one rush after him," she continued, coming to me closer and trying to distinguish my features.

"I am Mr. Haddon," I said quietly.

She repeated the name vaguely.

"The coward," I added.

There was an awkward pause. We began to ascend the second flight of steps.

"I am afraid you are assuming a name to which you have little right, Mr. Haddon," she said gently. "I believe that you saved my life just now. I am much obliged to you."

She extended a white hand in the gloom. There was absolutely nothing of sentimentalism in the action. And for myself, I was cynically unmoved. I received her thanks almost guiltily and a little sullenly.

"I little thought," she continued dreamily, "that you of all men would save my life. It savors a good deal of the melodramatic, does it not? It is very strange."

"At the best it was a lucky accident, Miss Brett. Frankly, you are unhurt rather because the man was a bad shot than because of any assistance I gave you."

I spoke the words thoughtfully and quite sincerely. I knew only too well that my interference would have been too late had Dr. Starva's aim been more sure. It seemed to me little less than a miracle that Helena Brett should be unwounded. I could take no credit for that myself.

Far from that, I should tell her the absolute truth if I were honest. I should say to her: "On the contrary, I have proved myself to be a coward again—infinitely more so than when Willoughby lost his life. Then I was exhausted, physically powerless. Now I have failed—still by the fatal three seconds—because terror held me spellbound for the moment. It makes little difference, so far as my courage or cowardice is concerned, that you are living while Willoughby died. In either case I have been equally weak." That is what I should say to her if I were an honest man.

But I did not. You see I am quite frank in these confessions. Really, then, I am showing that in this instance I was even a greater coward than before. For then I at least told the truth. I did not conceal from her the hideous word Willoughby had spoken before he died. Now I was concealing from her the fact that I knew I deserved the reproach as keenly.

We had reached the top of the steps. We walked slowly toward the Grand Hotel. Helena, I could see, was concerned with her own thoughts as much as was I. For a moment the shock of the accident had made her forget her errand. Now that we were near the hotel its urgency came to her with redoubled force. She was debating whether she should take me into her confidence. She was saying to herself, I was sure, that it would be a generous reparation for her unjust censure of me on the terrace of the hotel at Lucerne if she intrusted to me the deliverance of Captain Forbes.

"Why," she asked slowly, "should that man have lain in wait for me there? Was he a common thief, do you think?"

"No," I answered after some hesitation. "He is a Bulgarian, a political adventurer. I am afraid, Miss Brett, that he has had much to do with the disappearance of your brother."

She paused, startled.

"How should you know that?" her voice vibrated with suspicion.

"Because I have learned something of him at the chateau. I am a guest there." I pointed to the castle towers across the valley.

"You are a guest of that woman, Madame de Varnier?"

"Yes."

"Then, sir," she was hastening her steps, and spoke with cold hostility, "it is certainly not to you that I should be appealing for help."

"Miss Brett," I said with some bitterness, "you draw your conclusions very hastily. Is it impossible for you to believe that I wish to help you—that I wish to make atonement to you for the suffering I have caused you unconsciously?"

She looked at me intently, her eyes still wide with distrust.

"But you are at the chateau," she repeated. "You are a friend of that infamous woman who has ruined my brother. If you are her friend, how can you be mine?"

"I have not said that I am her friend," I protested quietly.

"But you are at the chateau." She spoke the words obstinately. That fact was in her eyes an unanswerable argument.

"Yes; and I know that Captain Forbes is detained there; I know that he has just signaled to you that fact and has asked you to get help. And now I want you to leave the matter in my hands. I demand that as my right. It is a task I have set myself. Once you said to me that I should save a life for the life that was lost thru me."

"You have already made that reparation, Mr. Haddon," she said almost humbly. "Fate has punished me that I should have judged you so hastily and so wrongly."

"No, no!" I spoke in fierce remonstrance. "Will you never be just to me? That was an accident, I tell you."

"I do not like you less that you say so."

It was hopeless to make her understand now. I should have confessed my cowardice sooner if I wished to be believed. She had judged as at Lucerne. And this judgment caused me much the greater pain.

"Listen." I drew her to a garden seat. "A life for a life—that is what you said. But if, instead of a life, it were a man's honor that I could save—if it were the honor of your brother?"

Her lips trembled. She leaned toward me in her appeal.

"Oh, you would crush me with the weight of my gratitude. Save my brother's honor, and, and——"

"I should then stand equal with other men in your respect?"

"Yes," she said faintly, her eyes bright with unshed tears. "We need a friend so much now. We are in such deep distress because of my poor brother. Evidently you know of his disgrace." Shame blanched her cheek.

"I know something of it," I said with sympathy. "Tell me, Miss Brett, do I not bear a marked resemblance to your brother?"

"At first sight it is startling," she cried eagerly. "When my mother and I saw you at Lucerne we thought you were he. When we learned that you were with Mr. Willoughby at the time of his death, you can understand how bitterly we resented our disappointment. Forgive me if I am again suspicious, but that I should find you the guest of Madame de Varnier now, at this time——"

"If I am to help you, you must trust me."

"I will. I do."

"Implicitly?"

"Yes."

"Even tho circumstances seem utterly against me? Even tho I may seem a friend of Madame de Varnier—to be in league with her against you?"

She hesitated. "She is a dangerous woman. If my poor brother has fallen a victim to her horrible beauty——"

"I shall be on my guard," I replied lightly, smiling at her fierce resentment.

"But you will continue to be her guest. Is that wise? How can you effect the release of Captain Forbes if you remain at the chateau?"

"How can I learn the truth concerning your brother, how can I do my utmost to save his honor (if it be not yet too late), unless I remain at the chateau—yes, unless I am on apparent good terms with Madame de Varnier?"

"You are testing my belief in you to the utmost, Mr. Haddon. I suppose you smooth the suspicions of your hostess as readily as you do mine."

She spoke bitterly. And if she found it difficult to trust me now, how much more difficult when she learned, not the whole truth, but a damning half-truth.

"Ah, you are wavering already in the trust you have promised to give me. Great God, you think that it is a pleasant task I have set myself? To smile on this woman, to play the hypocrite, to spy on her when I am her guest, that I may dog her, coax her into telling the truth, that I may entrap her accomplice and herself at the right moment? Miss Brett, I would wash my hands of this ugly business if I had not sworn to endure every ignominy and risk of being misunderstood not only by a man like Captain Forbes but by yourself. I tell you that if I have not a clear field to carry out my plans—if I fail, or am baffled by some well-meaning intruder, I am a disgraced man. No one will believe my defense—not even you. I may even be dragged to prison as a common felon."

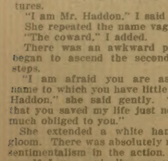
She placed both her hands in mine.

"Forgive me. My anxiety is so great. I do trust you. Return to Madame de Varnier, Mr. Haddon. I shall try to be patient. But Captain Forbes, am I to do nothing to help him?"

"Until this evening, no. You see I am testing your faith."

I looked at her keenly. She returned my glance with brave assurance.

"If you receive no word, either from Captain Forbes or myself, by midnight tonight, if you are not summoned to the chateau by your brother (and that I warn you is only too unlikely), inquire at the Grand Hotel for Mr. Robinson Locke. He is an American consul at Lucerne; he will help you."



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"He has already helped us. It was Mr. Locke who directed Captain Forbes and myself here to Alterhoffen."

"And will you not include among my services," drawled a voice behind us, "the fact that I was so fortunate as to save your life just now, Miss Brett?"

I looked up speechless. Robinson Locke met my startled glance with cool contempt.

"That you saved my life?" repeated Helena, in wonder.

"Have I robbed my gallant fellow countryman of your gratitude, Miss Brett?" he demanded carelessly.

"Then it was you who rushed down the stairway," I stammered, my face hot with shame.

"Yes, sir," he said sternly, "it was I. It is not a pleasant duty to expose the cowardice of an acquaintance, Miss Brett. I could have forgiven him his terror. But that he should masquerade as a hero while I was vainly attempting to pursue the blackguard who tried to murder you—that is a little too much."

I confronted him, my hands clenched in my rage. But I did not speak. A defense was impossible. I stared at him in silence.

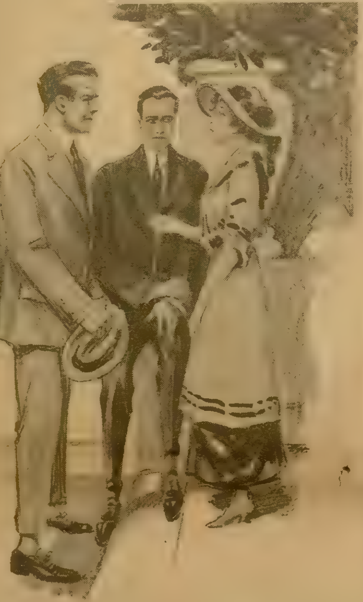
"I am afraid," he sneered, "that you are rather fond of wearing the lion's skin. I believe I had an appointment with you this morning at ten o'clock."

"With me!" I cried hotly. "No!"

"Then you did not receive the note placed on your pillow last night? Ah, so you did receive it, after all, Sir Mortimer—I beg your pardon, Mr. Haddon.'

I turned from him; I looked at Helena. Our eyes met. I did not say one word; I did not beseech even by a look. I had asked her to trust me, but I had not looked for a situation like this. Her eyes fell before mine and they had told me nothing.

"I shall leave you to your interview with Mr. Locke," she said quietly.



"I refuse to believe him guilty."

CHAPTER XXI

"NOW, Haddon, what is the game?"

Locke had seated himself. He had selected with care a cigar from his case (which he did not offer to me), and was regarding me with the brutal amusement of one who has come across a snake sunning in the white road, and who heads off its desperate attempts to escape with a walking stick.

I was silent. I refused to be catechised like a schoolboy. Had I met Locke, his mind still unprejudiced against me, I should gladly have told him everything, even at the risk of making myself ridiculous in his eyes.

But his mind was so evidently made up regarding me, his interference had been so fatally ill-timed, that I could not bring myself to the humiliating position of one who beseeches—of one who explains, only to be doubted after all.

The episode in the porter's lodge was even now far from clear. I have already said that I knew that Helena's escape was not due to any heroism of mine.

Dr. Starva had concealed himself behind the glass partition of the porter's lodge in the landing. Unobserved, I had stood flat against the wall, watching him.

I had seen Helena coming up the stairs; had seen Dr. Starva level his revolver at her; I had heard the crash of glass and the report of a revolver. I had supposed that Starva had fired and missed.

Now it appeared that Locke's shot had shattered the glass of the lodge, while Starva had not fired at all. But why Locke should have been in the stairway—why he should have been concealed there—was not so clear. Certainly I had no intention of humiliating myself further by asking for an explanation.

"Come; I'm waiting," he cried sharply.

"You are waiting—for what?" I demanded with an assurance I did not feel. I was playing for time. Should I, or should I not, try to make all clear to Locke? That was the question I was asking myself over and over.

"You remember I warned you. I told you you were a pawn in the clever hands of the Countess Sarahoff. I prefer to think that you are her tool rather than her accomplice. But if you have been fool enough to allow yourself to be caught in the net of her intrigue, if you have made your interests at one with hers, you must expect to pay the piper as well as she.'

"I see. You are Nemesis dogging me to justice?"

I had decided. No matter what happened, I would keep my own counsel for the present. I was not to be bullied into a confession.

"So you admit that the law has its terrors for you," cried Locke quickly.

"And are you Justice or the Law in disguise? By Heaven, you are assuming a rather high-handed manner. What the devil is your right to play the part of inquisitor?"

"Gently, gently. I said nothing about my right."

"Then I might ask what is your game?"

"I make no pretense to any right. I happen to hold the cards. That's all."

'By that you mean, I suppose, that you have put two and two together and made the sum five. Well, perhaps I say your arithmetic is at fault, and perhaps I don't choose to enter into an argument to enlighten you."

"We shall see," said Locke, quietly. "Now, Haddon, don't think that I am simply amusing myself. I am only too willing to give you every benefit of the doubt. You are an American; you have been at the same university as myself; you have suffered from an unpleasant notoriety the past week or two. I went to your hotel at Lucerne and offered you my friendship—"

"And you come as a friend now? Scarcely, you will admit that."

"I offered you my friendship. I showed my sincerity by taking you more or less into my confidence. I gave you a chance to confide in me in return. I had seen you fascinated by a woman whom I knew to be a dangerous companion. When I warned you, you were clever enough to affect a disingenuous innocence."

"What shrewd observers you newspaper men are!"

"That very evening," continued Locke, frowning, "you dine with her and her accomplice—not openly in the restaurant, but in her own sitting-room. Late that evening, in the company of Dr. Starva, you take the boat for Vitznau. You install yourself with him in the suite of Sir Mortimer Brett. You assume his character; more than that, you don his very cloak and hat. As Sir Mortimer, then, you have access to his rooms."

"Let me compliment you on the admirable manner in which you have played the spy. You traced me, then, from the hotel to the boat, and thence to the hotel?"

"Not at all. I preferred to keep my eye on the big fish in the puddle. It was Madame de Varnier, alias the Countess Sarahoff, whom I was watching. I knew that the moth would follow the flame. When I had assured myself that our beautiful adventuress had retired to her room across the corridor from Sir Mortimer's suite, I had nothing to do but await the arrival of the poor little moth, ensconced in a comfortable chair with my cigarette. Allow me to return the compliment, and congratulate you on your perfect success in masquerading as the sick Sir Mortimer. It was a delightful little bit of comedy."

Had Locke taken the boat in the company of Dr. Starva and myself he would doubtless have observed the episode of the brandy, and drawn his conclusions. His attitude toward me would then have been very different. He would have seen for himself that the comedy I enacted was for the benefit of Dr. Starva. If I ignored Locke's suspicions of me even now, if I gave to him my confidence at this late date, would he believe that? Impossible!

I raged at the network of chance that enmeshed me, but I did not attempt to extricate myself. I had lain passive too long. I was trusting blindly to fortune. More than ever I was determined to wait my own time before I made my position clear. If I carried my plans to a successful conclusion, the result would justify my actions; if I failed, I should at least have held to my purpose.

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rooms," continued Locke. "I am free to join my acquaintance, Captain Forbes, in the garden, meanwhile keeping an inquisitive eye cocked toward the shutters of Sir Mortimer's salon. And Captain Forbes, as well as myself, has his own interests in the missing Sir Mortimer. Presently he sees the light shining thru these shutters. He is overjoyed to observe that Sir Mortimer is returned, and more than overjoyed that he can at last rid himself of the burden of his dispatches. You know how he did that, even better than myself."

"And you are waiting for me to enlighten you"

"All in good time, my dear Mr. Haddon. But I have not yet shown you all my hand. Were I to call your game now, you might think that I had a couple of aces at the most. I am going to show you that I have a royal flush."

"It is hard to beat a royal flush, I admit," I said lightly

"I await developments, then, in the garden. My vigilance is soon rewarded. Shutters are thrown stealthily back; my classmate Haddon tiptoes onto the balcony; he listens outside the shutters of the salon"

"And does it not seem to you strange that the partner of Madame de Varnier's intrigues should distrust her to the extent of spying on her movements?"

Locke pulled at his cigar thoughtfully. I awaited his answer not without i[illegible] the faint hope in [illegible] cynically, "that [illegible]rhaps was not so [illegible]tances had proved [illegible]n I remembered [illegible]was insisting on [illegible]Mortimer. I could [illegible] my quondam [illegible]d Haddon was anxious for his own [illegible] I guessed that he was listening to the futile attempts of the adventurers to deny Captain Forbes admission to the bedchamber of the pseudo Sir Mortimer."

"You have an answer for every question"

"I can put two and two together and make four," returned Locke compla[illegible]tiv[illegible]

"But if one of those numbers is x, the unknown quantity? The addition is then not quite so simple.

"And the American tourist, Mr. Haddon, [illegible] unknown quantity, I [illegible]"

He [illegible] cool, level eye. A big man, in body, brain, and heart, Locke had both the virtues of bigness and its faults. To crush obstacles—that was his method. Finesse he despised. He went to the end in view in a direct line, ruthlessly throwing aside any obstruction, physical or moral, that hindered.

Such a man arrives invariably. He is not to be denied. But he blunders often. He arouses in some natures an instinctive antagonism—a latent obstinacy—that arrays itself against him quietly but determinedly. He makes an enemy when he might have made a friend

For example, Locke had made up his mind that an American, a man of his own university, could not in the nature of things be a coward. Very well, he offers him his friendship in blind faith. But presently this man interferes with his plans—goes his way without consulting the newly acquired friend. When, therefore, circumstances place this acquaintance in an ugly light he is quite as ready to believe the bad as he had been ready to believe the good.

In a word, Locke imagined that he had done more than his duty in offering his friendship and confidence. When he made up his mind that this friendship and confidence were not returned, his friendship turned to intense dislike. There was no middle course for him. He enjoyed a fight quite as much as a love feast, perhaps better.

"To resume my narrative," drawled Locke, "you disappear within the chamber. My friend Forbes is having his little interview with you. But presently I see you again at the window, packet in hand. You lean far out; you toss the packet into the basin of an empty fountain. The shutters are closed. Your work is finished for the night. And so is mine—that is, after I have rescued from the empty fountain the packet"

"Which you promptly returned to Captain Forbes, no doubt."

"Who has a greater right to it?" returned Locke coolly

But he had not returned it to Forbes; I was sure of that. Locke was a newspaper man trained in the somewhat unscrupulous school of modern journalism. He had determined on a grand coup for his paper. If the sealed dispatch promised to be of assistance to him he would break the seal.

That would not suit me at all. My task was to hush up the [illegible] Sir Mortimer Brett and his mistress. Locke was determined to give it the full[illegible] publicity. Our ends were utterly at variance. Every sentence of his recital made me see that more clearly

I saw, too that the object of his story was to overwhelm me with the certainty that I must make a full confession to him or suffer the consequences. My one hope was to avert those consequences until my interview with Madame de Varnier. I hoped everything from that.

For the present I need fear nothing from Forbes. Helena had given me her word that she would trust me until midnight. But the silence of Helena and Forbes was useless unless Locke also was silent. I awaited the rest of his narrative with anxious concern.

"The next morning I bestir myself early, you may be sure of that. Captain Forbes' rest had been equally perturbed. Together we discover the startling fact that, early as we had aroused ourselves, our patient with his nurse and physician had been even more energetic. But my discovery is of a nature more dramatic than that of the king's messenger. He imagines that it is Sir Mortimer who has fled. I am forced to the reluctant conclusion that it is Mr. Ernest Haddon, American tourist, masquerading as the diplomatist Sir Mortimer Brett. Is it necessary that I enter into explanations for this discovery, or shall we take the fact for granted?"

"Take it for granted by all means, since you have already taken so much for granted."

"I shall not bore you much longer Captain Forbes and myself joined forces. I needed but one argument to persuade him to do that. I knew where Madame de Varnier and her fellow-conspirators were bound; Captain Forbes did not."

"And Mrs. and Miss Brett—did you reveal your suspicions to them?"

"So far," Locke looked at me significantly, "I have revealed them to no one. We arrive at Alterhoffen, then, the four of us. Captain Forbes insists on storming the chateau. With what result you know better than I. As for myself, I prefer to keep my own counsel, and, first of all, give my friend Haddon a friendly hint. I bribe one of the servants at the castle to convey a note to him requesting the honor of an interview at ten this morning. My friend Haddon denies me the honor of an interview. Then if the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain.

"I am directed to the castle by the stairway that leads to the village street. I have not descended a dozen steps of the gloomy stairway when I hear some one coming up them in furious haste. Naturally I pause; and quite as naturally I take the precaution of placing my hand on the revolver in my hip pocket, which I carry with me, remembering the fate of my acquaintance, Captain Forbes.

"To my surprise the person in this extraordinary haste conceals himself in the little glass-covered room at the angle of the stairs. I descend the steps cautiously and curiously. There are other surprises in store for me First of all I see a second figure standing flat against the wall. As my eyes become accustomed to the darkness I am startled to discover that the man concealed in the lodge has a revolver in his hand. For the moment I think he is lying in wait for myself. But almost immediately I hear steps from below. There is a click as the trigger is cocked. I am averse to bloodshed—even the killing of a would-be murderer. I fire, not at him, but to shatter the pane of glass and divert his aim.

"Now for my last surprise. The assassin, rather tardily I must say, has been grappled with by the man who had concealed himself against the wall and was apparently awaiting developments. But the would-be assassin has succeeded in freeing himself from this very faint-hearted assailant. I pursue the assassin; he eludes capture; I return ruefully to the hotel to find—my friend Haddon receiving the warm thanks of the heroine for saving her life."

"A great deal of this is ancient history," I said, my voice trembling with shame and rage, "such of it as is not fiction. You return, then, to unmask the would-be hero. And now, what?"

"[illegible]," said Locke in a deep vo[illegible] face thrust close to mine, "I want to know this: Why were you [illegible] in that stairway? Why did you stand there passively while the man was committing the act of murder before your eyes? Why did you pretend to struggle with the assassin, pretend to struggle, I say?"

"Even a coward will fight, I suppose, when he is cornered," I said bitterly.

"Bah! don't mention that word to me again. I am sick of your hypocrisy. You don't deceive me, let me tell you. Your plea of cowardice is a convenient subterfuge. Every fact points to your being in league with these adventurers. A coward wouldn't have taken the risks you have taken. You saw the man hiding in the stairway; you saw him about to fire on a helpless girl; and you raised no hand. Am I talking plainly enough?"

I looked into Locke's eyes, glaring with rage and contempt, and I laughed aloud. It was actually a relief to have my weakness exalted to the plane of deliberate villainy.

"Laugh, my friend, but I am not to be deceived by a laugh."

"And now that I stand abased in my naked deviltry?"

"I give you five minutes to make a full and complete confession. If at the end of five minutes you still refuse, I shall have you promptly arrested for being a partner in the intrigues of the Countess Sarahoff, for masquerading as Sir Mortimer Brett, and for being an accomplice in the murder of Miss Brett."

Five minutes! The time was not long. I knew Locke would keep his word; but more than ever I was stubbornly resolved to refuse taking him into my confidence.

Could I tell him my reasons for acting as I had done? Could I tell him that I had set out on the romantic quest of saving a life for the life that had been lost? Would he believe that? At least without appealing to the woman who had set me that task? To drag in her name was impossible.

The minutes passed swiftly. So this was the end of my task! Disgrace and imprisonment! I had warned Helena that might be the case. I looked across the valley at the pinnacles of the Castle of Happiness. What a fool I have b[illegible]

"Your time is almost up," said Locke, grimly, looking at the watch he had placed on his knee. "And Miss Brett is walking in the garden over there. Do you wish her to see you marched off to prison?"

On the contrary, it was she who must set me free! I would put her to the supreme test. Now, if she trusted me as she had promised, I might yet escape from the awkward dilemma.

I rose to my feet. I called to her, "Miss Brett!"

She came to us. My maneuver so completely astonished Locke that he stared at me speechless.

"Miss Brett," I said quietly, "Mr. Locke has taken upon himself the task of bringing me to justice. He finds me guilty of complicity in the intrigues of Madame de Varnier. He refuses to believe that I am acting in your behalf. I cannot blame him for his suspicions. The facts are almost wholly against me—the surface facts. I do not even deny most of them. But he has woefully misconstrued my motives in every case. I refuse absolutely to tell him what those motives are. He has threatened me with arrest unless I

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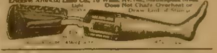
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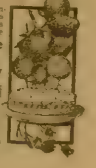

make to him a full and complete confession without delay. Mr. Locke, as I have said, is acting on the behalf of your mother and yourself. Personally he has no right whatever to make any complaint against me."

"Miss Brett will be the last person to shield you from punishment when she knows the truth," interrupted Locke, bewildered at my audacity in appealing to her.

"Among other things, Miss Brett," I continued eagerly, "he accuses me of being an accomplice in your attempted murder in the stairway."

"There are facts more tangible than that," said Locke, significantly.

"But I refuse to listen to them," said Helena, reassuring me with a quiet glance. "I am not so ignorant of these facts, perhaps, as you imagine, Mr. Locke. I have every confidence in you, Mr. Haddon. As to causing your arrest, that is absurd."

"Thank you," I returned, with a passion of gratitude in my heart. "You will hear from me before midnight. If at the end of that time you do not, I think it would be well for you to consult Mr. Locke. He knows a great deal of which you are ignorant."

"Be sure of this, sir, I shall not wait until midnight to enlighten Miss Brett," cried Locke, his face purple with anger and chagrin.

"Mr. Locke, let us understand each other," said Helena, and even Locke felt that her decision was irrevocable. "Mr. Haddon is my friend. I refuse to believe him guilty of dishonor, much less of deliberate crime. I refuse, and my mother will refuse, to press any charge against him. More than that, we trust him to help us in our difficulties."

Locke closed the face of his watch with a snap.

"If you have come to that decision," he said, with assumed carelessness, "there is nothing more to be said. If I can be of service to you, you will find me at the hotel at midnight, as the chivalrous Mr. Haddon has suggested."

We were alone. But Helena was of no mind to receive my thanks or my assurances that I had been absolutely ignorant that Locke or any other had been in the stairway.

"Until twelve tonight," she said.

"Until twelve tonight," I repeated. I lifted my hat and walked swiftly toward the chateau.

CHAPTER XXII.

WE TRUST him to help us in our difficulties."

Those were the words Helena had spoken; she trusted me, who had been called coward, to accomplish what the cleverest and bravest man must have hesitated at promising. For one cannot promise with reason to attempt successfully the unknown. It was the vagueness of my mission that made it so perplexing.

One cannot tear apart lover from lover as one tears a piece of paper. And yet, if Sir Mortimer were living and still enamored of his mistress, I had promised to attempt even that. If, on the other hand, Sir Mortimer were dead, I was to essay a duty even more difficult—to rescue his great name from dishonor.

Before midnight, then, there were two things to be accomplished: I must know the truth from Madame de Varnier concerning Sir Mortimer Brett, whether he were living or dead; I must rescue Captain Forbes.

It was to be a double duel: The first to be fought was Madame de Varnier, the weapons to be of her choosing, cunning and wit; the second, Dr. Starva, and he had already shown me what weapons he preferred.

To arm myself for my fight with him I supposed would be a simple matter. But when I made inquiries for a gunsmith's shop I learned to my dismay that there was none in Alterhoffen. I was compelled to return to the chateau empty-handed.

The terrace was deserted. I crossed it, close to the castle walls. I intended, if possible, to enter the hall unobserved by the little door under the winding staircase thru which I had followed Dr. Starva. I looked cautiously into the great room thru one of the mullioned windows. No one was about. Once within the chateau, and the door locked, I gained my room, and rang the bell for the servant. Jacques, the lackey who had shown me to my room the night before, answered the call.

"It is half-past one," I cried impatiently. "Is Madame de Varnier not ready for luncheon?"

The man looked his surprise.

"Luncheon has been waiting for your excellency. I came to your room some time ago, but there was no answer when I knocked."

"I had been wandering about the chateau," I replied carelessly. "So luncheon is ready. I hope I have not kept Madame de Varnier waiting too long?"

"Madam begs to be excused. Luncheon is served for Dr. Starva and yourself."

I followed the man to the room where we had dined, not at all pleased at the seclusion that she affected. I was impatient for action. Nearly twelve hours were to elapse before midnight, but there was much to be done before then. And if she persisted in not seeing me, I wondered how I was to force my presence on her. In the meanwhile I must attempt to learn something of Captain Forbes' detention.

I lunched alone, and well. The absence of Dr. Starva was only to be expected. Even so brazen a villain as he would hesitate to meet me with unconcern. During the struggle in the porter's lodge no word had been spoken by either of us, but certainly he could not have been ignorant of my identity any more than was I of his. When we again met, therefore, it would be as avowed enemies.

Frankly, I did not look forward to that meeting with pleasure. The fate of Captain Forbes pointed too obvious a moral. I had put myself deliberately in Starva's power by my return to the chateau. If I were unmolested it would be because my services were indispensable.

I had lighted my cigarette. Jacques was noiselessly gathering up the things. I had determined to take him into my confidence. I believed it was he who had brought me the note. I suspected that he was not ignorant of my leaving the chateau. He had accepted my excuse quite too readily. At any rate, I believed the fellow could be bribed. I demanded carelessly:

"And Dr. Starva? Is he, too, confined to his room?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. Evidently he held Dr. Starva in no great consideration.

"One knows nothing of him. He is mysterious, this Dr. Starva."

I looked at the man keenly. The adjective was significant.

"Everything about this chateau is mysterious, it seems to me," I remarked cheerfully. "Last night, for instance, I could have sworn I heard the shout of one in distress."

"Is it possible, monsieur"

"And when I retired I found a note on my pillow. I would give a hundred francs to the man who placed it there if I could find him."

"There is nothing too difficult to be discovered with diligence, your excellency," he said softly, his crafty eyes cast down

"So you were the faithful messenger." I took out my pocketbook.

"A little letter is a simple thing, and since it was not sealed, I knew that madam would not object." He smiled greedily on the notes that I had laid on the table.

"Ah, you are loyal to Madame de Varnier?"

"Very loyal, monsieur," he returned, with perfect seriousness

I intended to test this admirable loyalty. I was forgetting Captain Forbes. I proceeded cautiously

"Am I the only guest of the chateau?" I demanded, toying with the note

This strange story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. Do not fail to read it to the end

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Natural Reason.

"Why does a man never laugh when you pull a chair from under him?"

"Why should he?"

"Doesn't it upset his gravity?"

A Real Business Woman.

"A business woman, eh?"

"I should say so. She can sharpen her own lead pencil so that you'd think a man had done the job."

A COW'S INGRATITUDE

The Latest Occupation.

"Where were you born?"

"Cairo, Ill."

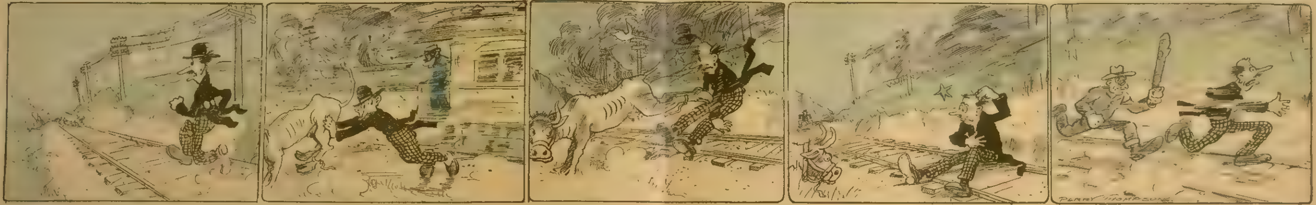
"What's your occupation?"

"I'm a Russian dancer!"

Half a Man.

"If you were half a man you'd go out and make more money."

"Yes, and I could do it easily then as an attraction in some museum show."



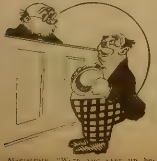
Longnosed Bill—"Great Hevvings, there's a cow on the railroad track, and the Cannonball Limited is coming just around the bend!"

Not a second too soon! That train would have made mincemeat of the poor brute if I had not sprung to the rescue!

"Woof! Ouch! Right in the gizzard! That's the most unkindest kick of all!

"Base, ungrateful milk-squirter, there comes your owner, and he will reward me as I deserve!"

Cow-Owner "You boneheaded s..p. I tied that moth-eaten old cow on the track, and if you hadn't butted in I'd got a hundred dollars' damage from the railroad! Scat! Git!"



Magistrate "Were you ever up before me?"

M Nab I don't know, your honor. What time does your honor get up?"

Overhead Charge.

Customer—"But why have rabbits gone up so in price? They're wild ones, aren't they? So you can't say it's the cost of keeping them?

Shopkeeper—"No, mum; but the truth is since all the best shots have gone to the war, it takes so many cartridges to kill 'em

Restricted.

"I am glad to note that your husband, who brings home the wash, seems to be a comparatively sober man"

"Yes'm I positively won't give him no money for likker Any money he spends for likker he has to earn himself

The Rank of the Waves.

A New York man was crossing the Atlantic with an army officer who suffered greatly from seasickness.

On entering the stateroom one particularly rough day he found the officer tossing in his berth, muttering in what at first appeared to be a sort of delirium

Stooping over to catch his words, the friend heard him say: "Sergeant . . . major . . . sergeant . . . major brigadier-general . . . ugh, lieutenant-general . a-a-ah!"

"What are you saying?" asked the friend in some alarm, as the officer looked piteously up at him after his last gasping "a-a-ah!"

"Assigning the waves their rank," said the military man, rolling toward the wall again. "There have been eight lieutenant-generals within the last twenty minutes"

His Mother's Son.

At the annual prize day of a certain school the head boy rose to give his recitation

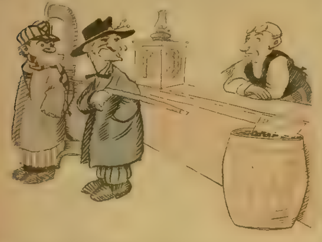
"Friends, Romans, countrymen," he vociferated "lend me your ears"

"There," commented the mother of a defeated pupil, sneeringly, "that's Mrs Jones' boy He wouldn't be his mother's son if he didn't want to borrow something."

Great Day for Bjones.

Bjackson—"You seemed to be having a very long, pleasant conversation with Bjones yesterday"

Bjones—"Yes, I had a puzzling matter to think out, and so I let him tell me all about his troubles"



Colonel Wiggham "We jest had a argyment as to when ye got in that hogshead of dried prunes W.s it 'fore or after the war?"

Village Grocer "'Fore I allus remember 'cause th came the last time I washed the winders"

TRACKING THE VILLAIN.

I like to track the villain down;
I mean inside a novel;
I like to trail him thru the town
And ferret out his hovel.

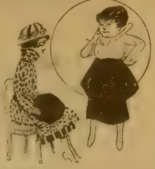
I like to hound the stealthy crook
And block his efforts tricky.
I like to bring the rogue to book,
A good thick book, by cricky

I like a lengthy chase, I do;
The same my zeal engages
I like to track the villain thru
About 200 pages.

His Delicate Appeal.

Charity workers often feel great awkwardness in making public appeal for funds. Few of them, declares the Washington Star, can carry off that embarrassment with the grace of the colored preacher who said to his congregation:

"Brudren. Ah kain't preach hyah and boa'd in Heb'n"



Lady Caller "Do you believe in preparedness?"

Ma "Well, I always like to have a little cold meat in the house"

Getting the Best of Them.

As Pat boarded the train and took a seat there was a smile of triumph upon his face

"What's the matter with you?" asked his friend

Pat's countenance beamed satisfaction, "Shure, I've been riding on this road fer tin years, and I've got the best of the company for once in me life.'

"How's that?"

"I've just bought meself a return ticket," lowering his voice to a whisper, "and, begorra I ain't comin' back"

Ironical.

The doors of a certain new house had shrunk horribly, as is the way of the modern door made of unseasoned wood The builder would not send the joiner to repair them, so the householder tried the ironical method and wrote

"Dear Sir The mice can run under most of our doors, but our cat cannot follow them. Will you please send a man at once to make room under the doors for the cat, and much oblige?"

Pat Didn't Believe It.

Bridget—"Well, Pat, what kind of a bird have you brought home in the cage?"

Pat—"Well, it's a raven."

Bridget—"A raven? And what did you bring home a bird like that for?"

Pat—"Well, I read in a paper the other night that a raven has been known to live for 300 years. I don't believe it, so I am going to put it to the test!"

Queen.

"I am going to a bargain sale of umbrellas. Come with me."

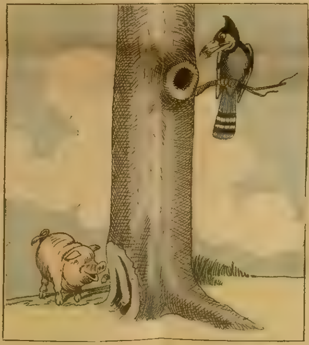
"Now, you wouldn't suppose they would put things down that are made expressly to put up

Believed in Better Pay.

A Scottish minister was one day talking to one of his parishioners, who ventured the opinion that ministers ought to be better paid.

"I am glad to hear you say that," said the minister. "I am pleased that you think so much of the clergy. And so you think we should have larger pay?"

'Aye,' said the old man, "then we'd get a better class o' men."



Jaybird—"Guess I've put about a million acorns in this hole—and it's not full yet"

Well Qualified.

Prospective Employer (perusing reference)—"Have you any knowledge of the silk and satin department?"

Applicant—"Spent all my life among 'em, sir"

Prospective Employer "And sheets and blankets?"

Applicant (forcibly)—"Born among 'em, sir!"

Was It Sarcasm?

Mrs Owens—"I wonder if the doctor's wife meant anything personal just now

Owens—"What did she say?"

Mrs Owens—"She said we might at least pay them a visit."

Enjoyed It.

There had been a terrific earthquake and afterward one lady was asking another if she was not terribly frightened. "Oh, no," she said, "I rather enjoyed it, for it was the first thing ever happened since I was married my husband did not blame me for"

Disillusioned.

"If women ran this country there wouldn't be any war," remarked the feminist

"Umph!"

"You don't seem much impressed.'

"No, I'm not. I was once a spectator in a convention hall where the Daughters of the American Revolution were trying to elect a president."

A Disciple of Edison.

Mrs. Popson—"I was reading where Mr. Edison says four hours' sleep is enough for any man."

Popson—"That seems to be the baby's idea, too"

Indifferent.

During Clark's service on the floor of the house he was one day approached by a newspaper man seeking Champ's opinion on a certain political question

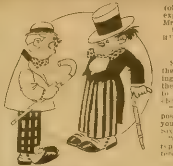
"I can't give you my opinion in this matter," was the response, "because it's a question I pay no attention to. I am indifferent to it—as indifferent as the backwoodsman's wife in Missouri The lady, you know, looked on while her husband was engaged in a fierce tussle with a bear She said it was the only fight she ever saw where she didn't care who won.'

It Haunted Her.

At a party Miss Brown had sung "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" and for days after she was singing or humming it to herself

"It seems to haunt me" she said to a friend who had also been at the party

"No wonder," said the friend "Look at the way you murdered it"



Johnson I've been pondering over a very singular thing

Billson—"What is it?'

Johnson—"How putting a ring on a woman's third finger places you under that woman's thumb"

For a Good Cause.

Two young fellows recently attended a tea for which they had bought tickets at fifteen cents each

The profits were to go toward the Belgian fund One of them, after consuming four cups of tea six ham sandwiches, a plate of bread and butter, two teacakes, five jam tarts and four large buns, was passing his cup for the fifth time, when he turned to his friend and said in a serious tone:

"I think every one should encourage a thing of this sort It's for a good cause you know'

Tradition.

"How is your boy Joseph getting along with his books?"

"First rate," replied Farmer Corntossel. He's learned a whole lot'

"Knows more than you do, I bet"

"I won't say that But he kin tell me a lot of things I already know in language I can't understand."

An Interesting Job.

The professional joker entered the office one morning in fine humor. "Say, Bill," he shouted to his friend at the next desk, "I heard of a job that would interest you. It takes only a few hours in the evening and pays good money

'Fine' said Bill "Tell us about it."

Well, you just go down to the aquarium and see my friend Mr. — He'll fix it up for you. But be sure you bring a trap along."

A trap?"

'Sure You'll have to have a trap The job's catching mice for the cat fish

A Double Surprise.

Funniman—"Now there's your husband coming, Mrs. Candour. Let's make a little surprise for him. Mrs. Funniman and I will hide behind the curtains here and you can tell him that the expected guests haven't come. Then we'll step out and surprise him."

(Enter Mr. Candour.) Mrs Candour (observing orders)—"Well, John, our expected guests have disappointed us Mr and Mrs. Funniman haven't come

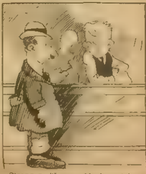
Mr Candour (heartily)—"I'm glad of it!"

Why He Was Sure.

Some people will never realize that there are more ways than one of arriving at the same result. They are like the shock-headed boy who was asked to add six and four. He guessed nine eleven and twelve

"No, no, you are only guessing' expostulated the teacher "But why didn't you guess ten while you were about it? Six and four make ten"

"Oh, no, they don't!" triumphantly replied the urchin "You told me yesterday that five and five made ten"



Stranger "I say, old chap, did anybody ever tell you that you looked like Napoleon

Bartender "Oh, yes but I've stopped lending money on it

Only One Word.

"It says here that the longest sentence in the English language contains 140 words said the old fogy

That's wrong" replied the grouch The longest sentence contains only one word

"What is that?" asked the old fog

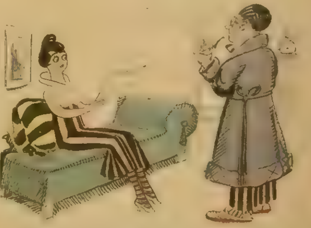
"Life," replied the grouch

Holding Him to His Word.

bbs (trying to get away) "Say, pa a minute Didn't you tell the caller night that I couldn't be beat for

ier—"That's just what I did you rascal

Well then what do you mean



Maud "I see a story about a man that swapped his wife for a dog'

Jack What was the fool's name—that swapped the dog'

HUNTING THE RED GOWN

Or, Molly Finnegan, Amateur Sleuth

By Helen E. Haskell

[Copyright 1916 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER XIV.

MOLLY breathlessly gave an address on Columbus avenue as she stepped into a taxicab at the Pennsylvania Station, set her bag on the seat beside her, and looked anxiously toward the zigzagging line of passengers, hurrying in the direction of the cab stand.

As the chauffeur threw in his clutch and the car started with a groan, she picked Tizzoni out of the crowd, and some distance ahead of him, the young man who had never made good.

"He'll certainly never arrive," said Molly, leaning back with a sigh of relief. "I never before heard of one man's shadowing another by walking in front of him. Thank goodness I have the start of Tizzoni in the race for the red gown."

As her cab whirled around the corner, the young man was giving an order to his driver.

"Follow that taxi in front of you," he said, "and don't lose it on your life."

He pulled out his cigarette case and struck a match. As the cab rattled and bounced over the pavement he sat back nonchalantly, one leg crossed over the other.

"It's rather a good lark, and the girl is a pippin. Clever, too, but she'll have to buck up a lot, if she manages to escape little Felix Fromen, the baby of the plain-clothes squad."

His reverie was interrupted by the cabby, who pulled open the flap in the ceiling and announced that the taxi in front had stopped.

"All right. Draw up at the curb."

As he looked out, he saw Molly jump from her taxi and hurry into a dingy secondhand store numbered —— Columbus avenue. Then, seeing that her driver was preparing to wait, he settled into the corner of his cab, took off his green hat and reset it carefully on his head, making sure that the little fringed bow of the band was in the exact middle of the back, slapped its brim down on one side, and pushed it up on the other, then leaned forward and looked into the shop where Molly could be seen talking with a billowy-hipped saleswoman.

The woman pulled several gowns from an array of gaudy evening dresses hung up in the shop window. Molly looked at them and shook her widow's bonnet. Twice she came to the door, and, lifting her veil, looked nervously up and down the street. The waiting taxi, pulled up at the curb across the way, did not disturb her.

At last, after she had spent about ten minutes in the store, the saleswoman took a pencil from behind her ear, wrote something on a slip of paper and handed it to Molly, who took the paper, re-entered her taxi, gave some directions to her driver, and was whirled away.

"Follow them," said the young man, leaning out to speak to the chauffeur. He seemed to have forgotten all about Tizzoni.

As the engine on the second taxicab began to throb, a third car pulled up in front of the secondhand shop, and a dapper man with a straight-front figure and a slim waist leaped out and entered the store. Felix Fromen saw him, shrugged his shoulders, and chuckled softly.

"Looks as if the Dago dressmaker were on the Mollywidow's track, too. There seems to be a procession of us."

Five minutes later, Molly Finnegan's cab drew up in front of a dingy building on Fourteenth street. Strains of dance music came from the top floor.

Molly descended from her taxi, paid and dismissed the driver, and with her veil thrown back from her piquant face, climbed three sets of progressively dusty stairs. At the head of the top flight she came upon a man in a checked suit and pink shirt, entrenched behind a broad shelf, who demanded a ticket.

Molly opened her purse. "I haven't a ticket," she said, with a fetching smile. "How much is the admission?"

"Fifty cents for ladies."

Molly placed the money on the shelf.

"Dressing-room on the right," said the man, handing her a ticket. "Dance numbers distributed on the inside."

Molly stopped for a moment at the dressing-room door. Half a dozen girls in light gowns were crowded around a mirror. Another sat on a bench changing her thick-soled high boots for a pair of soiled white satin slippers. It was the night of the annual Polish ball and Little Poland had turned out en masse.

Molly crossed the room and entered the dance hall. It was decorated with bunting. At one end there was an improvised refreshment stand, half-concealed by artificial palms and flags. Near it was the orchestra. In the gallery opposite were gathered groups of staidly dressed men and women—the middle-aged onlookers.

As Molly entered, the grand march was just winding up with a double figure eight. Molly paused in the door, around which a crowd of young men were gathered, smoking, then edged her way toward the gallery staircase. As she reached its top the music ceased. There was the clamorous sound of voices, drowned almost instantly by the lively strains of the Czardas.

Molly found a seat that commanded a view of the floor. Blinking her eyes, which smarted from the smoke, she tried vainly to distinguish individuals among the dancers.

Never had she beheld such a chaos of whirling color. Girls in reds and greens and purples glided over the floor in a dizzying maze. It seemed as if not only Little Poland, but all of New York's East Side, had turned out for the ball. Molly's head spun round. She tried to concentrate her attention on red gowns, but it seemed as if there were a thousand of them, flashing, whirling, and half of them were trimmed with spangles.

Molly crept to the edge of the gallery, bending far over, to get a better view of the floor, when suddenly the music stopped. The dancers flocked to the corner screened off by palms. There was the buzz of many voices, the sounds of laughter.

The floor was almost cleared. Molly's eyes swept from one red dress to another. Then, with a disappointed sigh, she settled back, only to start and lean forward again. A man had pushed his way thru the crowd near the door, and was making his way from one group of people to another. His back was toward Molly, but she recognized the long-waisted, wasp-shaped outline. It was Tizzoni.

"He'll beat me to it yet," she murmured, with a catch in her breath, just as a woman wearing a glittering, spangled gown swept into the room, holding her slinky fish-tail train self-consciously out of the dust. Molly gasped.

"The red gown," she whispered huskily, as she sprang to her feet, and scurried down the stairs, her black crepe veil floating out behind like a shelf. Elbowing her way thru the crowd, oblivious of the strange figure she cut in her dreary widow's weeds, she finally reached the side of the red gown.

"Pardon me," she said, as she came abreast of it.

The words had barely left her lips when she was thrust rudely to one side, and turning angrily, saw the greenish white face of the Italian dressmaker. For the moment his unctuous manners were forgotten; he was rude, terribly excited.

Molly, frightened by the expression of his eyes, fell back a step, while the woman in red turned an inquiring glance at the dressmaker, who had seized her arm.

"Madama, one moment!" he cried. As he spoke the music struck up, and the woman's partner, a burly blond in a Tuxedo coat and white waistcoat, placed his hand on his companion's back.

"Wait!" shrieked Tizzoni, grasping the man's wrist. "You taka da chance most beeg."

The man snapped the dressmaker's restraining fingers from his arm with an impatient gesture. Then he replaced his hand on the bespangled back of the young woman who wore the red gown with a sagging of hips and shoulders that quite destroyed its wonderful lines.

"Signorina, per l'amor de Dio!" shrieked Tizzoni. "Stop! I moosta speaka wid you. Eet ees mosta import."

"Who's your friend?" growled the blond man, crooking his elbows and doubling his fists in a pugilistic attitude. Then, turning to Tizzoni, he went on: "If you are looking for trouble you can get it right here. But you wait five minutes. We have our dance first. See?"

"Signor, I eemplore you. You maka da meesunderstand!" cried Tizzoni, still clinging to the girl's arm. "Eet ees later dat I speaka da apology for interrupt. But first I moost speaka wid da lady, five, seex words."

Molly, standing on the edge of the crowd, listened, crestfallen and speechless, while Tizzoni remonstrated with the dancers. Suddenly the blond man seized Tizzoni by the shoulder and spun him around. "Stop interfering. We've paid our good money to dance, and our ticket gives us this number. There ain't no Dago goin' to interfere wid' our havin' it. If you've got anything to say to my lady friend, you say it after this dance. Do you get me?"

Again he laid his arm across his

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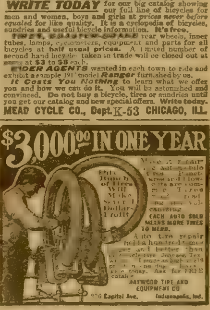

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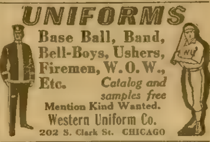

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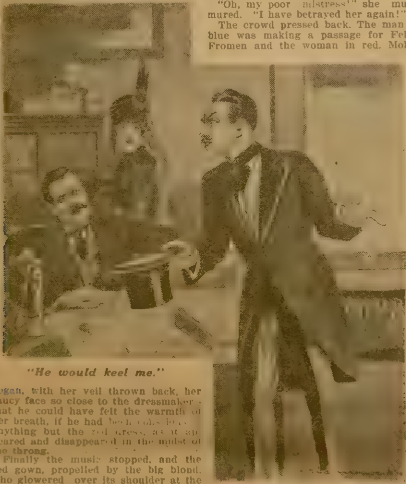
partner's back, his right hand outspread beneath her shoulder. Tizzoni reeled and almost fell against Molly Finnegan. Then, thrusting his hand into his coat-tail pocket, he pulled out a silk handkerchief and wedged it into the palm of the pugilistic blond.

"Mi piace, signor. Please!" he cried, excitedly. "Do not be insult, I eemplora. I hava conseeder only for you."

"You wait here five minutes and I'll settle with you," the man called back angrily. The couple whirled away, but between the man's hand and the red dress gleamed Tizzoni's white silk handkerchief.

The circle of onlookers surrounding the dancers surged back and forth, but Tizzoni managed to keep in the front ranks, and beside him, huddled almost against his shoulder, stood Molly Finnegan, with her veil thrown back, her saucy face so close to the dressmaker's that he could have felt the warmth of her breath, if he had been eyes for anything but the red dress, as it appeared and disappeared in the midst of the throng.



"He would keel me."

Finally the music stopped, and the red gown, propelled by the big blond, who glowered over its shoulder at the little dressmaker, approached. Molly backed into the crowd behind her, then started.

Somebody had taken her by the arm. Looking up, her eyes encountered the merry gaze of Felix Fromen, the young man who had sat opposite her on the train.

"What's the row?" he demanded airily. "If I were the little chap I'd make a getaway while there was time."

"He's after the red dress, and I'm afraid he'll get it."

"You don't mean they're going to fight over that lithograph in red?"

"It's the dress—Mrs. Van Horn's red dress!" said Molly, excitedly. "He's going to get it in spite of me. He's been after it ever since the Major's death." Molly brought herself up short, and, forgetting for the moment her quest, gazed with frightened eyes at the young man. "Oh, I forgot!" she murmured. "You—you——"

A light had leaped into the young man's face. "Gad, girl! Is that the missing gown?" he cried. "What luck!" He plunged forward, thrusting aside the crowd that had gathered around Tizzoni and the woman in red, seized the dressmaker by the shoulders, and thrust him out of the way. Then he took hold of the red gown. "Where'd you get this dress?" he demanded officiously of the sagging-shouldered girl who stood clinging to her partner, a bewildered expression on her face.

"I—I bought it at Bernstein's," she answered.

The young man seemed taken aback for a second. Then he threw open his coat. On his waistcoat glistened a silver star.

"Come, now, tell me the truth," he said. "That dress belonged to Mrs. Van Horn. How'd you get it?"

"I bought it at Bernstein's."

The girl's escort had made a threatening movement when the young man first seized his partner's arm. He sidled away at sight of the star.

"Where's Bernstein's?" asked the young man.

"—— Columbus avenue."

"Aha! That explains Molly Finnegan's movements." The young man closed one eye. "Well, madam, I guess you'll have to come with me. Officer," he went on, speaking to a bluecoat who had shouldered his way thru the crowd to inquire into the disturbance, "I'm Felix Fromen, of the Washington Police Department—a plain-clothes man. I've got to have this dress to take back to Washington with me. Our detectives have looked for it everywhere. It's needed for the inquiry into the death of Major Van Horn, who was murdered in his home last Tuesday night. The dress belonged to Mrs. Van Horn."

Molly had managed to get thru the crowd by this time and stood just behind the young man. Hearing the last words she clapped her hands to her eyes.

"Oh, my poor mistress!" she murmured. "I have betrayed her again!"

The crowd pressed back. The man in blue was making a passage for Felix Fromen and the woman in red. Molly clinched her fists desperately and looked around, just as Tizzoni, his eyes burning in their sunken sockets, his face ghastly, thrust himself thru the press of people and reached the woman in red. The next instant Molly caught the gleam of a shining instrument and lurched forward. As she did so Tizzoni staggered against her. Molly caught him by the arm, looking wildly after the girl in the red dress. In the dressmaker's hand there was a gleaming piece of steel. Had he plunged it into the back of the girl?

Holding the man's coat sleeve in a desperate grip, Molly pulled him toward the stairs. Then as the crowd separated she had a full view of the red gown. In the back of it there was a great rent. It exposed its wearer's bare shoulder blade.

Molly fell back, still clinging to Tizzoni, who made no effort to free himself from her grasp, but was muttering and sobbing to himself.

"Well," she said, as the crowd started down the stairs, "you and I have both lost out. But there's no use in making a fuss about it." She let go of the dressmaker's arm, looking at him disdainfully, her upturned mouth twisted to one side. "It was a pity to cut the dress, Tizzoni."

He shook his head vehemently. "Oh, no, mees! Eet ees so dat I hava sava da eennocent."

He held out his palm. On it rested a patch of red silk and spangled chiffon. His laugh was hysterical. "Beholda—here in my hand I hava eet secure. I hava deestroya da gown, but I hava sava da lives. You see eet, mees? Eet stands in my hand—da needle wheech would so easy deestroya da eennocent."

Molly stood looking at the man, her eyes and mouth wide open. People who had followed the woman in red and her police escort to the head of the stairs had returned. The music struck up. Nobody seemed to notice Molly and the Italian. The girl leaned forward, gazed into the outstretched palm of the dressmaker, then, with her forefinger, gingerly touched the spangled silk in his hand.

"I—I don't understand," she said.

Tizzoni smiled, showing his fanglike teeth. Strange fires seemed to be burning behind his eyes. He was still a trifle hysterical.

"Do you not see eet, mees, da leetle barb, lika da hook? Eet ees in da hook dat I hava place da poison wheech so qeeckly maka dead all who embraca da red gown. But I hava not intend for eet to deestroya da eennocent."

Molly stared at the barb. For the moment she was paralyzed with horror. She shrank from the dressmaker, one hand pressed against her bosom.

The man took out his handkerchief and very carefully, almost tenderly [illegible] seemed to Molly, wrapped the piece of red silk in it. Then he started toward the stairs. Molly's senses returned with a rush. She seized the man's arm.

"Bring an officer!" she almost shouted. A youth standing near by heard her. He looked at her stupidly. Tizzoni tried to jerk his arm from her grasp. She held on grimly. "Bring an officer!" she cried. "There is no time to [illegible]."

This time the youth obeyed, while the dressmaker struggled desperately to free himself. Several men, seeing the tussle, came to Molly's aid.

"Is he a pickpocket?" demanded one holding the dressmaker [illegible]. Before Molly could reply an officer [illegible] joined the group.

"What's the row?" he demanded, eyeing Molly suspiciously.

Molly relaxed her hold on the dressmaker's arm, and before replying adjusted her widow's bonnet. When she spoke it was with commendable calmness.

"Arrest this man, officer, and take him to the station."

The officer [illegible] shoulder. The [illegible] had begun to sob hysterically. [illegible] the charge?"

"Murder," said Molly, throwing up her chin.

The officer's brows came together. "Who's making the charge?"

"I am. Molly Finnegan, the detective."

The officer hesitated. "You are making a serious accusation, my girl," he said. "What's the man's name?"

"Tizzoni. He's just confessed. He's responsible for the death of Mr. Frederick Colton at the Knickerbocker restaurant in Washington. He'll tell you everything, won't you, Tizzoni?"

"I hava sava da life," sobbed the dressmaker. "I hava not intend [illegible] for slaya da eennocent. I hava weesh only to avenge—I hava fulfeel da vendett."

"Well, come on. I guess we'd all better ride around to the police station."

As they stood in the stairway, wait-

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ing for the patrol, Molly had a chance for sober reflection. Five minutes ago she had been in despair because the young man who was trying to make good had carried off the red gown. Now everything was changed. After all, it was Molly Finnegan, the clever detective, who would free the innocent and jail the guilty, as she had set out to do. Molly bit her under lip.

Would the young man be at the police station when they arrived, and would he again forestall her by flashing his silver star? Molly wanted all the credit that was coming to her. She felt that her future depended upon her success in this case.

She looked up at the police officer. In the lamplight he caught the flash of a pair of tip-tilted, long-lashed Irish eyes.

Mr. Officer," said Molly, flashing her dimples, "I have worked hard on this case. I'd like to be the party to get this man's confession and send it back to Washington. You see, I'm a private detective, and this is my first case. There's a young man likely to be at the station who'll take it away from me if he can. He's already got part of it. Couldn't we go to some real quiet place and get Tizzoni to tell us his story, sort of privately?"

"Sure, miss," said the officer, entirely won over by Molly's charms. "We'll go straight to the chief of the detectives. If this little Dago is the bad egg that you say he is, you ought to get all credit that's coming to you for landing him." He paused, looked admiringly at Molly. "My, but you're a youngster for this business."

Molly stood as high as she could. "I'm close to 21, sir," she said. "A good bit older than I look, you see."

Before the officer could reply the patrol wagon rattled up, and Molly, Tizzoni, and the officer climbed into it.

CHAPTER XV.

AMELIE VAN HORN sat propped up in bed with the evening paper spread out upon her knees. Her oval cheeks had thinned during the past two days, her small, tenderly dished mouth had lost its color and had taken on a pathetic droop. There were shadowy lines between her brows, bluish crescents under her eyes. Even phlegmatic Katie who had come upstairs to [illegible] while the nurse [illegible], noticed the change in her appearance and was [illegible].

"The woman warned me against letting yez see the paper, Missus Van Horn, but I thought it was but right for yez to see what they are saying about yez so you could be afther seeing a lawyer and preparing a defense for yerself, as that novel-reading Molly Finnegan would say, who has disappeared just whin she was naded —"

"Ssh, Katie!" said Amelie Van Horn, holding up a remonstrating hand. "Please go into the other room. I do not wish to be disturbed until I call you."

Katie turned away with a sigh, and Amelie Van Horn adjusted the shade of the electric light at the head of her bed and began to read. Beneath a [illegible] that [illegible] the upper third of the first page were printed the new developments in the police investigations into the Van Horn and Colton mysteries. As Amelie Van Horn read the opening paragraphs she gasped and clutched at her throat.

"New and interesting complications have arisen in the mystery surrounding the death of Major Ritchie Van Horn, the popular young army officer, who was found on the floor in his library Wednesday morning with his desk spindle imbedded in his side. The police feel confident that the young man who called upon the Major early in the evening and whose identity they were unable to establish, was Frederick Colton, the young Californian, who was later found dead in the Knickerbocker restaurant, from poison injected into the fatty portion of his palm by means of a poison ring or a hypodermic needle.

"On the night of Major Van Horn's murder Mrs. Van Horn attended 'Parsifal' in a red gown that attracted much admiring comment. This gown was heavily trimmed with spangles, and was only completed on the night of the opera. The police have been anxious to locate it ever since the death of Major Van Horn, but its whereabouts are still a mystery. The police are confident that when found this gown will have telltale traces upon it. These traces would explain Mrs. Van Horn's reluctance to acknowledge its possession. She has persistently denied having a dress of the kind, ever since the murder, and has been upheld in her denials by a housemaid, who this afternoon boarded a train for New York and is now under police surveillance.

"This red dress also figures prominently in the mystery surrounding the death of Frederick Colton. It seems that Mrs. Van Horn left the opera early, on the night of her husband's death, and going to the Knickerbocker restaurant met Mr. Colton, remained but a few moments, then started home on foot, driving the last half-block of the way. Jim Bellows, head of the local detective force, who has been doing magnificent work in solving the two mysteries, this morning located the cabman who took Mrs. Van Horn home on Tuesday night, after she had walked almost the entire distance. Chief Bellows, who has had a police nurse in the Van Horn house since Tuesday, has also found that the seal on the letter found in Mr. Colton's pocket was made with a carved ivory-headed hatpin belonging to Mrs. Van Horn. Having placed the beautiful widow in the restaurant on the night of her husband's death, all that seemed remaining for the police department to learn was a motive for the crime that killed young Colton. It is now almost certain that a motive can be proved.

"This afternoon word came from California that Frederick Colton was interested in the establishment of a colony of new settlers in the southern part of the State. A few years ago he bought an enormous tract of land, paying for it a small amount of cash, and giving notes for the remainder. He immediately began laying out a town and selling lots. For these lots he gave the subscribers bonds for which deeds to the land purchased would be exchanged at a later date. For a year and a half everything went smoothly. Altho no deeds had been given, a large number of colonists located in the town, building upon and improving their land, to which Mr. Colton promised to give them title in a short time. About two months ago Mr. Colton attempted to clear some of the land in order to give title to his settlers, and at the same time attempted to renew several notes. To his amazement he found that all of the notes had passed into the hands of Major Ritchie Van Horn, who refused to renew them. It seems that Major Van Horn had also discovered the existence of some old mineral rights against the land, and had bought them for a song. These he refused to sell. Mr. Colton found himself unable to raise money to take up his notes until the mineral rights could be secured, and as Major Van Horn refused to dispose of the mineral rights at any price, altho they were virtually worthless, Mr. Colton found himself in a nasty predicament, as he had sold land to which he could not give title. He came East to see Major Van Horn, and it is now believed that, failing in his mission, he seized the Major's desk spindle, and, in a moment of passion, delivered the fatal blow. This is the [illegible] held by the police. It seems tenable, especially since it brings to the fore again an old scandal that was the talk of army and navy circles at the time of Major Van Horn's marriage with the beautiful Amelie Wheeler. Miss Wheeler was engaged to a young man named Colton. Everything was ready for the marriage, which was to take place in Venice, when the lovely Miss Wheeler eloped with young Van Horn, then a Captain in the United States Army. When Major Van Horn and his wife returned to this country, the Major was bearing a scar across his cheek which he had not carried to Europe with him. It was whispered at the time that the gallant army officer had been given a caning by the jilted suitor.

"Now comes the question of Mrs. Van Horn's part in the mystery. The police theory is, that learning of her old-time lover's presence in the city, she wrote the note signed 'Carita,' asking for a meeting in the Knickerbocker restaurant. It is supposed that she went there and in some way discovered that young Colton had taken her husband's life. Did she then, in a fury of revenge, retaliate by striking Colton with a sharp instrument previously charged with bundare, the deadly South American secret poison? Or did she premeditate——"

With a groan Amelie Van Horn crushed the paper in her hands. Katie hurried to her side just as the door opened and the nurse appeared.

Amelie Van Horn looked at the woman; in her eyes there was a hunted expression. She clasped her hands against her bosom.

"Oh, I am helpless, helpless, in this terrible mesh they have woven for me!" she sobbed.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I TELLA all—da vendetta—all, eef you giva me da time, eef you no speaka een soocha loud roughness," said Tizzoni, mopping his forehead with his handkerchief, from which he had carefully removed the bit of spangled silk, placing it on the chief's desk.

"I moosta first begin tree—four year ago. I am one so happy citizen in Venezia. I hava da mudder, da leetle seester, verra pretta, nama Lucia. She ees young and all da day singa lika da leetle birds in da trees in Sicily, whera we hava been born. I worka for da tailor. We maka da robe for all da so granda womans who come to maka da veesit in Venezia. I maka da mon. I buy for da leetle seester da beads for da neck, da slippers for her so leetle foots, for I am an arteest. I maka da mon sufficient for all. We hava da cottage verra nice. Eet ees near to da Hotel Chiaventoni, where ees a garden verra beautiful for serva da wines and da foods for da so reech guests of da hotel. Lucia has moocha amusement seeing da womans verra grand. I hava da proud in da chest to see how all regarda my so leetle seester. Da ladies turn to look after her, da mans behold her wid admiring eyes. Den one day, so unloocka, my mudder has falla seeck. She standa no more on da feet. Da leetle seester maka da promenade alone. But always she ees happa. She singa most sweet. Da days fly away wid themselves. Da weenter comes. Lucia sings no more. No more she walka on da feet dat fly. Her cheeks are verra white wid da holes in dem. I hava demand, ees she seeck? She shaka da head. I am seeck in ma heart. But always moosta I work in da shop. I hava moocha occupation. Da mudder ees in da bed, verra seeck. Da leetle seester ees each day mora meager.

"Den coma da spreeng. Eet ees morning. Sudden my heart eet ees lifted up. My so leetle seester I hear in her chamber. She seenga. She dressa herself verra fine. I go to my work. I coma home queeckly in da night."

Tizzoni paused and buried his face in his hands. Molly wiped her eyes sympathetically. The stenographer who was taking down the confession sat stolidly waiting. The chief rapped on his desk. Tizzoni raised his haggard face.

"Eet ees my last day of gladness. Da mudder ees dead on da bed. One so good woman seets by her side. Lucia has run out of da house. Her heart eet ees brake. I moosta go and looka for her. I hava fraid she has loosa da mind. Across da street ees da Hotel Chiaventoni. At da gate ees Lucia. Da mans and da womans looka at her. She wreenga da hans. Her hair eet ees [illegible] arrange. She moan verra terrible. I run queeckly to her side. I demanda what eet ees—why has she gone in da garden of da Hotel Chiaventoni. She cry out. She wreenga da hans. 'Oh,' [illegible] I hava been [illegible] among hees so reech frands! I hava [illegible]' She weesha to die. In da night she maka da moan verra terrible. When da morning eet ees come

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LONE SCOUT [illegible]

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I go wance again to da Hotel Chiaventoni. I demanda what has happen. One mans maka explain. My leetle seester has verra moocha annoy da areestocratic American, Captain Van Horn. She has throwa herself on hees breast before hees so reech frands and bewail verra loud.

"Da Captain has remonstrate wid Lucia and has calla da mans to queeckly put froma da garden one so bold girl, or he moosta call da police. He has joompa up from da table with soocha roughness dat Lucia has fallen verra forcible and has knocka da deesh from da table.

"I go wance again home. I demanda da explain from Lucia. She hava say how seex monta before, she has become acquaint wid da American mans, Captain Van Horn. He has loove her verra dearly, but he hava explain dat an American soldier cannot marry wid an Italian girl until first he secure da permit spec-i-al froma da officer verra high oop. After, he go away. Lucia gets no let. She has grieva verra mooch. Seex monta pass. Den cooma a let, verra short. Da Captain retoorns once again. Lucia meeta wid da mans. She demand has he da permit spec-i-al. He looka at her so pale face. He poosha oop hees shoulders. He toorna away. Wance again Lucia comes home. She ees verra oonhappa. She weela talk wid da mudder. She weel maka da confidence how da American mans hava braka da heart. Alas! Eet ees too late. Da mudder has passa away. Lucia ees deestract. She has run to da garden of da Hotel Chiaventoni, where in da evening da Captain has da custoom of eating. She trow herself een hees eembrace. He has toss her aside, and has demanda da mans to put her queeckly in da street.

"I go from da house. I would keela da mans. But he has go away. I sweara da vendett. Misero mio. Lucia grows every day more seeck. She maka da moan. She strika da chest. She cry for having deesgrace her lover before hees so reech frands. She loosa da flesh. She ees every day een da bed. One night she passa away.

"Now ees deestroy all da leetle family, so happy. I maka ready for depart. I weel fulfill da vendett. I taka my mon and queeckly buy one ticket for America. I geev to myself da name of Tizzoni. I maka da search for Captain Van Horn. He has disappear. My mon go on da gallop. I moosta work. I open da shop. I am an arteest. I maka da creations verra beautiful for my so reech customers. Tree years pass themselves away. When I am not feeled wid anger for my seester, I am moocha content. One day I read in da paper of Major Van Horn. I maka da question. I find out where ees hees house. I looka at eet een da nights. I go in da libraire publeeck. I looka in da romance Italian to find how eet ees best to fulfeella da vendett. I read of da needle wheech keel. I hava da plan. I weel deestroya da man wid a needle verra secret. I loosa da sleep for maka da plan. But none are success. Den one day comes Madama Van Horn She weel hava da robe. I am deestract wid happiness. I weel maka da gown and een eet weel I place a hook in wheech I feexa da poison. On da back of da gown I have inserta da needle. Da robe—eet ees most beautiful. Ah, I am sure da Major weel eet eembrace when een eet he has seen hees so beautiful a wife. I hava carry da gown to da house. I have secreeta myself in da conservatory. I weel see da mans die. I wait. One, two hours go away. A young man seets wid da Major. I hear talk verra loud of da moneys. Da young man depart. Da fury possessa me. I moosta speak wid Major Van Horn in da face. I moosta say who I am. I moosta fulfeel da vendett

"I open da door. I go een da room. He feexa me wid hees eyes. He risa oop een hees chair. He ees a mans verra large. I am small. I am sure he weel keel me. I see on hees desk one so small spear. Eet ees lika da stilett. I taka eet een my hand. I strika. Eet goes not verra deep. Da mans ees purpla wid furiousness. He joompa oop. Da weapon—what you call eet shiver een hees vest. I look for a stiletto more strong. He leaps upon me. Hees fists are togedder doubla oop. He would keel me. I spreenga away. Da floor eet ees verra olly—what you call eet—slippery. He fall verra forcible. I open da door. I walka from da house. Een da morning I read dat Major Van Horn ees dead. I am delight I look een da paper wance again when eet coma again more late. I reada of da younga man who has died verra queeckla een da Knickerbocker restaurant and of da womans who has run away. I hava da fear. I think on da red gown what I hava produce. I maka da hurry to Mrs. Van Horn's house. I offer to maka da mourning eef een retoorn——"

He paused, looked at Molly, drew himself up, pointing at her with a bony forefinger. The strange light faded from his eyes.

"I do not oonderstan. You weara da mourning costume wheech I hava produce for Madama Van Horn. Eet hasa da wrinkla over da chest. I——"

"Go on with your story, Tizzoni," said Molly, frowning at the interruption.

The dressmaker sank back in his chair. "My story is finish. Madama Van Horn has sent away da red gown. I hava ta finda eet and sava da eennocent. I hava cut out da poison needle. I hava sava da life."

Again the dressmaker eyed Molly critically. The confession had relieved his mind. Once more he was the artist, annoyed that one of his creations should be displayed at a disadvantage. He reached over and grasped the shoulders of her bodice, taking up the cloth as he would have done in his own fitting-room. Molly jumped to her feet, shaking off his hands.

"Well, this clears up everything," she said. "Mrs. Van Horn is safe, and I suppose I'd better get something to eat." She paused, then went on as if she were alone. "I suppose the young man who is trying to make good is already beating it for home with the red gown in his grip, chuckling over the sensation it will make at the inquest. My, but what a bomb this confession will be!" She turned to the officer. "Will this story be printed in the morning papers, sir?" she asked

"Yes, if we can get it signed up and put into readable language."

"And will they say that I got it?"

"Certainly. And now will you answer a few questions, Miss——"

"Finnegan," supplied Molly.

"And your business?"

"I've been doing second work for Mrs. Van Horn while I studied my profession."

The officer raised his eyebrows.

"I'm a detective. This is my first case."

The man passed his hand over his mouth. Then he pulled out his watch. "It's after twelve. Where are you going to spend the night?"

"I hadn't thought of that, but—why, Mr. Officer, I think I'd better get right back to Mrs. Van Horn. She'll be needing me. What time does the next train leave for Washington?"

"At one o'clock. But I'm likely to need you to clear up a few points. The matron has an extra room "

"Thank you, but I really can't stay I haven't had anything to eat since noon, tho, so if you could manage to get me a sandwich and some coffee, I'd eat it, answering your questions between bites."

The officer smiled, pushed an electric button, and turned again to Molly

CHAPTER XVII.

IT WAS at eight o'clock in the morning that Molly Finnegan entered the Van Horn house. As she opened the kitchen door, Katie extricated herself from a pile of newspapers and clutched the girl by the shoulder.

"Aren't yez ashamed of yerself, Molly Finnegan, to see your name in letters three inches tall and the newsboys a-hollering about yez so loud that I could hear them six blocks away?"

"They always do when you are famous," said Molly, unpinning her mistress' bonnet. She laid it on the table, then sank wearily into the yellow chair by the sink.

"Oh, Katie, it is good to be home again where it's all peaceful and quiet! There were no less than twenty reporters at the train to meet me, and I had to have a police guard to get me safely to a taxi. I surely am tired to death."

"Ye poor girrul! I'll make yez a cup of tay the first thing, and then the mistress will be afther wanting to see yez. Whin I showed her the papers she went off into a fit of laughing and crying like to break her heart, and the nurse distracted about how in the world to put a stop to it."

"I have saved her from the finger of calumny," said Molly, solemnly; then, looking up, met the appealing blue eyes of Amelie Van Horn, who had opened the door softly, and stood with one hand on the jamb, the other outstretched toward Molly

(Continued on Page [illegible])

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WILL $120 A MONTH AND AUTOMOBILE [illegible] Secure valuable agency. Auto necessities. Guaranteed fast sellers. Quick re-[illegible] Remarkable money makers. [illegible] Rayburn Co., 181 N. Dear[illegible]

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MAN OR WOMAN OF GOOD CHARACTER in each town to distribute free goods as advertising; experience unnecessary. [illegible] quired; $15 a week to start. [illegible] 5 South Clinton St., C[illegible]

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LADIES $2.50 DAILY. STEADY SEWING; material furnished, prepaid [illegible] an-[illegible] sample 10c. A. & O. Supply [illegible]

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WE PAY [illegible] AN HOUR FOR SPARE TIME [illegible]

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EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

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WILL PAY $750.00 CASH FOR $5 GOLD piece dated 1822 (without "In God We Trust"); $50.00 for 1853 half, without arrows; $5.00 to $50.00 cash for large cent 1799, etc. We pay cash premiums for all large cents, eagle cents, 2c pieces, etc., and all rare U. S. and foreign coins, bills and stamps to 1912. Thousands of rare coins wanted. Many valuable pieces are in circulation. Send 4c. Get our large illustrated Coin Circular containing valuable information. It may mean much to you. You certainly have nothing to lose. Send to Numismatic Bank of Texas, Dept. 1[illegible] Fort Worth, Texas.

25c BUFFALO NICKELS, ORIGINAL buyer of them and Lincoln pennies at 25c each, certain kinds, and hundreds of other old coins, has catalog quoting highest prices. Send 10c for catalog and particulars. Nat'l, Dept. 104, Olney, Ill.

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SMALL MISSOURI FARM, $10 CASH AND $5 monthly; no interest or taxes; highly productive land; close to three big markets. Write for photographs and full information. Munger, D-133, N. Y. Life Bldg., Kansas City, Missouri.

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LANDOLOGY, A MAGAZINE GIVING THE facts in regard to the land situation. Three months' trial subscription free. If for a home, or as an investment you are thinking of buying good farm lands, simply write me a letter marking it personal and say, "Mail me Landology and all particulars free." Address Lloyd M. Skinner, Gen'l Mgr., Skidmore Land Co., 26 Skidmore Bldg., Marinette, Wis.

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WANTED TO HEAR FROM OWNER OF good farm or unimproved land for sale. H. L. Downing, 190 Palace Bldg., Minneapolis, Minn.

FARMS AND FARM LANDS

BIG LAND OPENING—VALUABLE GOV-ernment irrigated homesteads—43 farms—80 to 160 acres each. March 19 to 24. 41 additional government irrigated farms will also be open to entry. Location near Bayard and Minatare, Nebr., in North Platte Valley, on Burlington Route. This land is well adapted for alfalfa, small grain, corn, sugar beets, livestock and dairying. Terms, land free; permanent Government water right $55 per acre; 20 years' time, payable $2.75 per acre down; no further payments for five years; no interest charges. If interested, there is no time to lose. Our publication, "North Platte Valley," free on request, gives an excellent idea of this desirable locality. Write today. S. B. Howard, Immigration Agent, Burlington Route, 428 Q Bldg., Omaha, Nebr.

GOOD LANDS: WEST. MICH. SMALL OR large tracts; $10 to $20 an acre; long easy [illegible] is; free book and map. Swigart Land Co., [illegible] 249 First National Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

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PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. [illegible] patentability search and report. Send [illegible] and description of invention. Latest [illegible] id most complete patent book ever published for free distribution. (Ninety pages) George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

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WRITERS! — STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc. are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, [illegible] Hannibal, Mo

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POULTRY PAPER, 44-124 PAGE PERIODI-[illegible] up to date, tells all you want to know [illegible] care and management of poultry for pleasure or profit; four months for 10 cents. Poultry Ad[illegible] ate, Dept 128, Syracuse, N. Y.

PERSONAL

MARRY—WOULD YOU MARRY A REAL nice lady who could greatly aid you financially? If you would, then I dare you to answer this today, as I will gladly introduce any worthy man to hundreds of ladies desiring marriage, ages eighteen to sixty, who claim to be worth from $1,000 to $25,000 and upwards. More particulars, including hundreds of descriptions of ladies with many nice, large beautiful photos sent free to any man having a legal right to marry who answers within ten days from date of this paper. (General delivery addresses not answered.) Any postage enclosed will be appreciated. Address "Sincere," B 520, Valley, Neb. This notice is genuine and will stand fullest investigation.

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MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL [illegible] descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

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HUNDREDS WEALTHY MEMBERS SEEK-ing early marriage. Des[illegible] Mrs. Wrubel, 752 18th St. O[illegible]

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SANITO COTS, PURE RUBBER. THREE sizes, one for 25c, 3-50c, 7-$[illegible] Rex Specialty Co., Kalamazoo, Mich.

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GET MARRIED — BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed free. The [illegible] respondent, Toledo, Ohio

GET MARRIED; LARGEST MATRIMONIAL magazine published. Mailed free. H. Jahn, [illegible] Paul, Minn.

FUTURE TOLD—10c BIRTHDATE. SATIS-faction guaranteed. Florence Edwards, 205 S. La Salle St., Dept. A, Chicago

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EXCHANGE CARDS, LETTERS, PHOTOS with pretty girls, send 10c. Jolly Card Exchange, Decatur, Indiana

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SPEND VACATION, SPARE TIME, PROFitably—gathering butterflies, millers. Many kinds wanted for museums. I pay highest prices. [illegible] Send 2c stamp for particulars and 8-page folder. Sinclair. Box 244. D-[illegible], Los Angeles, Cal

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THESE WANT ADS CHANGE EACH WEEK

New offers come and go—old offers change—something new and different in each issue.

READ THEM THIS WEEK AND OFTEN

UNDER THE LASH.

(Continued From Page Six.)

wished Dan'l Ferguson to make good his escape.

When he came to, he was lying on his right side in Sarah Dorsett's one bed, and melted mutton-tallow salve was soothing the network of lash cuts on his magnificent bare back. He saw that the widow herself was kneeling very near to him. He turned his eyes slightly, and saw that the widow's little son, whose boyish face was tear-streaked and gray, stood beside him. And it made him very happy when he saw Littlejohn's face, for he knew that at last some one had wept for him—for him, the savage.

"Bill!" cried Littlejohn, angrily, "who was the d——d ——"

"Boy!" chided Sarah Dorsett, dumfounded.

"Scound'el 'at done it, Bill?" finished Littlejohn, undaunted.

Bill Slagle smiled weakly.

"He'd orter be hung higher'n Haman, the——"

"Oh, Littlejohn!" Mrs. Dorsett wrung her hands.

"Shet up, Sary!" bellowed a gray old mountaineer, a preacher, who had been a man before he had become a servant of the Lord. "Let him say it jest this oncet for the good of his little soul. It's all the truth, anyhow, Sary."

The room was filled with kindly, sympathetic people. Brokenly, awkwardly, Bill Slagle told them all there was to tell, beginning with the moment of his stopping to watch the banks and shocks and sheaves of flowers, and ending with the moment of his sinking to the ground in his cabin yard. The people of the Big Laurel understood, and there was much rejoicing.

When the people had gone and left him alone with the widow and her son, Bill Slagle reached for the widow's hand, and got it.

"I knowed you wasn't blind, Bill," smiled Sarah Dorsett, tenderly. "The first time you fiddled for me, I seen you a-watchin' yore fingers work!"

"Then what made you——"

"I understood it all, Bill," and her brown eyes were very bright.

Slagle spoke to Littlejohn: "Son," he drawled mischievously, "ax yore mother thar if she don't think you need a feller about the size o' me for a pap. Tell her the feller'll work the blood outen his heart for her. Tell her he loves the very ground under her blessed feet. Ax her, son."

Littlejohn repeated it almost word for word. He seemed much in earnest.

"Tell him yes, Littlejohn," smiled the woman; and she hid her face against the cheek of the man who had done a greater thing than the taking of a city.

* * *

GETTING RESULTS.

Every time that I essayed
Just to woo and win a maid
Somehow failure crowned my plan
So at last I went to Anne—
Anne the quiet, Anne the w[illegible]
Anne of deep, unfathomed eye
Feeling that her judgment sure
Would for me success [illegible]

How Maud failed to feel my spell
How I lost my chance with Nell
Ah, I freed my troubled mind
Of my woes with womankind
Yes, I told Anne then and there
Of each luckless love affair
For I was determined quite
That my next should go all right

Weighing that and judging this
Showing where I went amiss
Anne gave me such good advice
I could make no blunder twice.
And when next I went to woo
Anne was there to see me thru
I am now a happy man;
With her help I captured—Anne!

* * *

BRINGING HIM TO TIME.

"When I was a young man," declared the man with the iron jaw, "any young woman who expected a fellow to spend so much money on her would have been dropped with a thud! She would not have been considered at all! Taxicabs and expensive chocolates and orchids——"

"I never sent anything worse than roses in my life, pop," declared the younger edition of himself across the desk, earnestly. "You don't understand how much money it takes these days for a fellow to hold up his head——"

"Huh! Don't I?" breathed the man with the iron jaw. "If you fancy I am existing in ignorance of that fact I should be pleased to draw your attention to the sheaf of bills in the third drawer at your left! And you have the nerve to ask that your allowance be increased! I know why it is—you want to cut a splurge before some girl!"

"There isn't any particular girl," declared his son. "Of course, I have to be decent to 'em—and you can't ask a girl to the opera and expect her to go on the street car in pink satin slippers that cost twelve dollars."

"Great Scott!" gasped his father, falling back aghast. "Twelve dollars for a pair of slippers!"

"Any young woman," he said, catching his breath, "who will spend $12 for a dinky pair of slippers is bound to be an extravagant wife and ruin a man's career! Why, when I was a boy a woman could have got six pairs of high shoes for that sum, each warranted to wear a year! Why can't a young woman wear sensible clothes to the opera and sit upstairs and enjoy herself? Six dollars for a taxi—against twenty cents for car fare! It's time the young woman of today thought a little! If she has any real interest in you she'd be glad to help you save five dollars and sixty cents——"

"Oh, nonsense!" said his son. "They haven't any sentimental feelings about me—or I about them! I'm just repaying dinners and other parties and they're glad to have some one take 'em around for a good time."

"Well, that's not my idea at all of the way things should be managed!" declared his father, with warmth. "I don't like any such cold-blooded give and take! You ought to pick out a nice girl that you like, and——"

"How can I get married till I earn a lot of money?" demanded the young man. "Besides, I don't want to get married—and neither do the girls. We're too young. Honest, I'm not squandering money, dad. I have to hold up my end, you know!"

"I should say you did!" said his father, glaring at the bills in his hand. "You must use a derrick to get it up high enough! I'm trying to beat into your head the idea that I want you to be sensible and not be carried away by the extravagance of the age! I won't have you throwing money at the birds. Your allowance is big enough. When I was a young man I could have bought and sold the whole town on that allowance!"

"The cost of living has gone up," the young man reminded him. "It's hard for me to keep up with the rest. It's humiliating, especially when you're known to be so blamed well off!"

"Huh!" said his father. "What's that got to do with it? Have to make a fool spendthrift of you just because I can afford to do it? S'pose you want to get into the papers as the gilded chap who gives big tips and never wears the same tie twice!"

"You don't understand," said the young man. "I might as well retire to a cave as to keep up the struggle on what I have now. The girls won't stand for it! All the fellows do those things for 'em, and——"

"By all means!" said the man with the iron jaw. "Do they expect diamonds on their birthdays, too?"

"They wouldn't accept anything of any value!" declared his son.

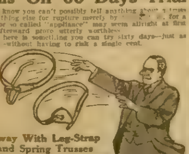
The man with the iron jaw choked. "Oh, no—nothing but twenty dollar banquets and two dollars a pound bonbons! Retiring little things—with their twelve dollar slippers! When I was a young man twelve dollars would have supported a whole family in luxury for a week!"

"Bob Carter's father," said the young man, casually, "gives Bob just twice as much money as I have to spend!"

"What!" shouted the man with the iron jaw. "Old Carter isn't in it with me! Why, he came near bankruptcy last year! If he can give that little whiffet of a son of his as much as that, I'll not have them crowing over my family!"

"Do I get the doubled allowance?" inquired the young man.

"I'll triple it," said the man with the iron jaw. "I guess a young fellow needs more money nowadays."



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Glen, the Boy Pilot

Or, Rafting on the Muskalong

By Milford Merrill *Author of "Riding the Logs," etc.*

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Begun in No. 8, February 19 [illegible] tions can begin with that issue [illegible] copies can be obtained from news-stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER X.

TO SAY that the boy raftsman was taken unawares is drawing it mildly. He failed to recognize the small official gentleman who had touched his arm announcing him a prisoner.

"Some joke, I see," smiled Glen, at the same time feeling a queer chill of uneasiness steal down his spine.

"You may not think so after a little," sternly returned the man. "Wait one moment while I read the warrant."

Glen waited, of course. He had dismissed Jack and the two men who had preceded him up town. The small man drew out a paper, reading a warrant for the arrest of one Glen Dayton for criminally, feloniously, and otherwise unlawfully destroying a boom, said boom being used by The Oxbow Booming Company for the purpose of holding back certain logs, and so forth, at a point on the Muskalong River, situated a certain number of miles from Milliron Point.

It was the usual verbose legal paper issuing from a magistrate, restraining Glen Dayton from further freedom till discharged by the proper authority.

"So I am a prisoner?" said Glen.

"Such is the fact, young man, and for a grave offense."

"The cutting of a boom across the Muskalong River?"

"Exactly, Mr. Dayton."

"But I did not cut it."

"No?"

"Certainly not," indignantly de[illegible] the boy raftsman. "I am not a fool."

"A criminal is seldom that."

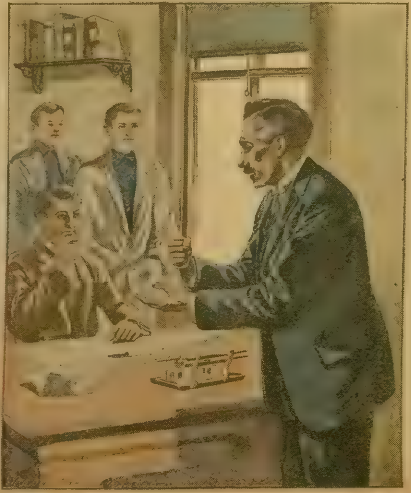
"But I do not even know that a boom [illegible]"

"A pretty story!" sneered the officer. "You will have time to call the fact to mind while sleeping in Oxbow jail tonight."

"What! You'll never take me to jail?" cried indignant Glen.

"You are on your way there now, young man."

"But you haven't a right to put a freeborn American in jail without any proof that he has done wrong," still protested the boy pilot.



"You ought to set him free at once."

"Oh, haven't we? You'll see as to that within ten minutes."

Glen relapsed into silence as the officer thrust him into a waiting vehicle and drove away up town.

"A pretty mess!" thought the boy, while keeping silent.

Glen felt humiliated by his arrest. He hoped his Aunt Eunice would not hear of it. She had worries enough of her own not to be brought into contact with the troubles of others.

As for feeling the least alarm over the incident, Glen was quite happy over the fact that he was wholly innocent of the boom-cutting. It was as Jack had predicted; the boom had been cut, but by whom was beyond the ken of the boy raftsman.

It seemed the boom in question was within the limits of the county in which Oxbow was situated, consequently in the jurisdiction of the county officials. The prisoner was turned over to the sheriff, who received the boy with a good-humored smile.

"Sorry, my boy," said Jeff DeLong, "but the law is no respecter of persons. It was very imprudent in you to force an opening for your rafts in the way you did."

"I haven't done a thing unlawful," cried the indignant Glen.

"The court will decide that."

The prisoner [illegible] supper at the sheriff's table. Mrs. DeLong seemed a sympathetic, well-bred woman, and Glen told her the exact facts while he sat waiting for his supper.

"Somebody owes you a grudge, I fear," said the kindly woman. "I hope you will be able to prove an alibi."

"Must I be locked in jail for the night?" queried the anxious boy.

"I think Jefferson can arrange that, [illegible] He [illegible] prisoners [illegible] I am [illegible] to give you the parlor bedroom, and, of course, we shall have to turn the key in the lock. You won't mind that, will you?"

The smile of friendliness accompanying the word carried a balm to the heart of the boy, who forced a laugh, saying:

"It is very kind of you; I shall not mind the locked door, of course."

And that was the way it was settled.

It was too late that night to think of getting a hearing before a magistrate. Glen, however, thought to see Jack Adams in evidence before the night was over. In this he was disappointed, simply because Jack did not go to his Aunt Eunice's house as he had sometimes done. Instead, the boy from Waukegan put up at one of the hotels, spending the evening at a show.

Early the next morning, however, Jack went to the widow's cottage in quest of his employer. He knew the custom was to return to Old Woman's Bend the next day after reaching Oxbow.

"Where is Glen?" asked Jack, after the first good morning was said.

"I haven't seen him for some time," answered the aunt, her face suddenly becoming grave. "Did he come to town with you?"

"Why, yes, of course," explained the wide boy. His blue eyes lost their humorous twinkle when he noted that Mrs. Trescott seemed alarmed.

"He hasn't been here. Did you come down this morning? You must have got an early start?"

"We came last night with two rafts," went on Jack, hurriedly. "My sakes! I expected to find him here. Well, maybe he stopped at a hotel——"

"Oh, no," quickly intoned the woman, "he would never do that. Glen knows I shouldn't like to have him stop anywhere but here when he is in town. Where did you leave him, Jack? Maybe he is hurt——"

"Tush, Mrs. Trescott! Don't go to harboring fear for old Glen," broke in the moon-faced boy, laughing cheerfully. "Trust Glen for keeping himself safe in Oxbow. He's got lots of friends here with whom he might stop—the Walders and Weatherbys for two, I call to mind. Don't you borrow any trouble, ma'am. There ain't the least call for it. I know that."

The woman's face brightened a bit under the cheerful notes in the boy's voice, yet Jack could see that her mind was far from being set at rest.

"Perhaps you would not mind going out to look for him, Mr. Adams?"

"That's what I shall do; and when I find him I'll fetch him directly here, Mrs. Trescott. You rest easy till I come. There's places enough for him to stop. I know he is all right. He may have been detained late settling up some business. Don't worry. I shan't be gone long."

With that Jack strode away whistling at the top of his lungs. A cheerful young man was Jack Adams, and the heart of Mrs. Trescott went out to him. She had learned from her nephew that Jack was an orphan, and had seen many ups and downs in life during his short career.

Jack made his way back to the hotel. By this time news had come of the mishap that had befallen his employer. Highly indignant, Jack Adams hurried to find the Oxbow county jail. He found the sheriff here, also Glen, who met Jack with a crooked smile.

"They've arrested me for cutting the Oxbow boom, Jack. What do you think of that?"

"It's another one of their tricks, Glen," angrily voiced the other. "I told you these Oxbow millowners were a parcel of rascals. I guess you'll begin to think as I do after a while."

Glen and the sheriff were starting for a magistrate's office, where the boy raftsman expected to be examined. Time was precious, and Glen was anxious to get back to work.

"I don't think there'll be any trouble. I can prove that I wasn't near the boom when it was cut," declared the prisoner.

A jolt awaited the boy when he arrived at the magistrate's office. To his surprise and hurt astonishment, Shedd Weatherby appeared against him as his accuser. It seemed that Mr. Weatherby was at the head of the Oxbow booming association, and it was his duty to prosecute all cases growing out of damages to the booming property.

Jack went in with his friend and declared his readiness to prove that the prisoner was miles away when the boom was cut.

"We shall see how that is," muttered Mr. Weatherby.

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One of the first witnesses called was a big Ottawa Indian, one who was well known as a hunter and trapper along the length of the Muskalong.

"Indian Joe will take the stand."

The big redman sat down in the armchair in front of the magistrate's desk. He wore the stolid exterior of the proverbial redman.

"Do you know the prisoner?" asked the lawyer who had undertaken the prosecution.

"Yes, I know him."

"When did you see him last before this morning?"

"Up near Milliron. He and dis odder feller benn dar lookin' at der boom. Dey was much mad; talk loud and angry. Threaten and shake der fist."

"What seemed the cause of this anger?"

"Big jam logs. No can git raft tru."

"Well, Joe, what then happened?"

"Dis boy," pointing to Jack, who sat near the door, "took up ax make for boom."

"Yes, he cut the boom by order of the prisoner, did he not?"

"Not des time. Glen him call him stop. He see ole Joe lookin', so make as if to go way. Me see him, dis wide short boy, come back. He git ax, cut [illegible] boom."

Jack, listening with both blue eyes popping, now sprang to his feet.

"The old redskin lies!" he cried, his face hot with anger.

"Keep quiet, young man," ordered the court. "You will have a chance to tell what you know later on."

"I never went near the boom again," muttered the indignant youth, seeing the eyes of Glen riveted upon him.

He had gone from the presence of Glen and the other two rafters, for a short time, simply to look after a woodchuck which had dashed into the brush. Might it not be possible for his friend and employer to believe the Indian? This worked on the Waukegan boy's mind more than the fact that he was falsely accused. But then he was with Glen when the log-jam began to move. it was simply impossible for him to have been at another place at the time

Again the witness was put thru a severe case of questioning. He seemed honest, and swore point-blank that he saw Jack return and cut the boom. He also testified that the logs did not start to move immediately, giving the boom-cutter chance to escape up the river before there was a sign of what had taken place.

Glen looked uneasy. Jack believed he was doubting him.

"I'll go on the stand and swear"

"Keep quiet," whispered a voice in the ear of Jack.

A hand touched his shoulder as he resumed his seat. He glanced upward into the stern face of Mr. Shedd Weatherby.

The examination went on, ending in the holding of the accused boom-cutter to the next session of the higher court

"The prisoner may have twelve hours in which to secure bail," said the magistrate. Glen was remanded to the care of the sheriff till it was decided as to whether he was set free under bond, or sent to jail till the sitting of circuit court, now more than a month away. The amount of bail was placed at two thousand dollars.

"You can furnish it, can't you. Mr. Weatherby?"

It was Jack Adams who addressed the lumber king of Oxbow thus

"It wouldn't look well for me, the complainant, to furnish bail," sneered the rich man.

"Oh, well, you aren't much of a man, anyhow, to persecute the boy who saved you a thousand dollars in breaking your rollways last spring!"

With that Jack turned and hurriedly joined Glen and the sheriff, assuring his boy friend that he would have him free of the law before night

CHAPTER XI.

JACK knew that Andrew Jackson Dedham would stand between his rafting boss and jail when he learned the facts The boss of Old Woman's Bend, tho a hard, scheming man, was yet open to looking after his own interests. Glen had done so well with the rafting that Jack felt sure Dedham would help his young friend in the present instance.

Hiring a fleet horse the boy mounted and rode swiftly up the river. Inside of three hours he was knocking at the door of Dedham's square castle on the hill overlooking the Muskalong.

"You seem to be in a hurry," said the big lumberman, when Jack was ushered into his presence. "I haven't seen Glen this morning. Didn't he get back from Oxbow last night? No? Well, I trust you had no bad luck"

"Just a wee bit of ill luck, Mr. Dedham," vouchsafed Jack.

Thereupon he gave an account of the misfortunes of the previous day, explaining everything so that the lumberman could see that Glen had been wrongly accused. Dedham was at odds with the Oxbow millowners, and at once sided with Glen and Jack.

"We'll see about that, yes, we'll see about that," commented the lumberman, taking a turn about the room. "You say somebody cut the boom and let the whole blamed jam thru, eh?"

"Yes," said Jack, "and Glen is under arrest accused of the crime——"

"No crime at all, boy, no crime at all!" snapped Dedham, his teeth showing in anger. "Of course, I wouldn't advise Glen to cut anybody's boom, not without consulting me, at any rate; but, dum it, they haven't a right to block the river with their logs. It's a nuisance, and anybody has a right to abate a nuisance, anybody has, of course, eh, J[illegible]"

The big man halted in his walk about the room facing the visitor.

"Of course you are right, Mr. Ded[illegible]" agreed the boy, heartily, his big [illegible] s snapping. "To tell the truth, sir, I wanted to cut the boom, but Glen wouldn't let me. That's why I ain't in the cooler at Oxbow instead of him. Whoever cut the thing did it on purpose to get Glen into trouble."

"Who hates Glen like that?"

"Several coyotes aren't any too good to do it," quickly declared the Waukegan boy. "Blink Wade, Budge Hull, or even big Eph Eckle"

"What's the trouble with them?"

"Contrary mean for one thing; another because Glen is so much smarter than they are. They're jealous of his success."

"A lot of fools!

Dedham made swift preparations to go to Oxbow.

He was plainly excited over the news Jack had brought. Had it been any other trouble Glen might have got into the lumberman would not have been so fast in going to the rescue. Like John A. Beaver of Wenago, the big man of Old Woman's Bend hated the millowners at the mouth of the river, who had put so many obstructions in the way of navigating the Muskalong

"I'd like to go to the State Legislature for no other purpose than to get thru a law to oust these highwaymen from their clutch on the river," muttered Dedham, while making his preparations. "They'll pay all the expense I am to this trip, or I'll know the reason why."

Jack was vastly pleased at the unexpected stand taken by the millowner. He had feared, as had Glen, that he would feel inclined to lay the blame wholly on the young raftsman, allowing him to get out of his trouble as best he could.

"You can ride with me," suggested Dedham, as a man brought out his horse and attached it to a buckboard about the only style of carriage in use at that time in the lumberwoods. Jack, however, had to return the animal he had ridden, and so declined to ride with Mr. Dedham.

It is not necessary to go into all the particulars of the case. The boss of Old Woman's Bend soon convinced the Oxbow authorities that it was no unforgivable crime to open a legal highway when the obstructers refused to [illegible] themselves. Besides, the fact of Glen's guilt had not been proved

"You ought to set him free at once," declared Dedham, at the end of a strenuous expression of his opinions.

The magistrate decided to bind the young man over to next circuit court, despite the eloquent indignation of the up-river millowner.

"All right," snorted the angry [illegible] "Produce your papers and I'll [illegible] them, but remember there'll be a settlement later for this dirty outrage."

The boy raftsman was set free, held, however, under a bond of two thousand dollars to appear at the next session of court and answer to the charge of feloniously cutting the Oxbow boom.

Glen rode back with Mr. Dedham, to whom he felt beholden for his prompt act in coming to the rescue. The boom-cutting incident was closed for a month, at least. Meantime something might turn up to exonerate the boy raftsman.

All this trouble broke in upon the rafting work, much to the chagrin of Glen Dayton, who was anxious to get caught up with the mills.

There were several hundred thousand shingles now on the dock waiting shipment. These the millowner informed Glen must be got to the mouth at the earliest possible moment, as he had sold them to a Milwaukee firm who insisted on immediate shipment

"I'll do the best I can, sir."

"Well, see't you do, boy."

Glen set his whole crew at the lumber rafting, then set forth to look for other men to place the shingles. At the end of his first day's hunt he corralled four new men, who came promptly to the scratch, and shingle rafting went on simultaneously with that of lumber.

Things were now moving at a lively pace, and Glen was pleased at the outlook. The river was not likely to be jammed again till at least a month later, at which time he was to have his trial for boom-cutting

The process of rafting shingles is radically different from that of lumber. A framework of pine poles is made the length of the intended raft. These are bound together by cross poles pinned to the framework running the length of the raft. Usually about two hundred thousand shingles, or eight hundred bunches, are placed in a single raft. These are confined by the pole crib and are really quite substantial, runways for the oarsmen [illegible] made of plank to give a more re[illegible] footway. These shingle cribs or rafts are by no means so strong as are the lumber rafts, and require more careful handling.

Glen piloted the first shingle raft, making sure that all was right at the lower part of the river before setting out. The millowners at Oxbow seemed to quiet down after Glen's arrest and binding over to circuit court. Jack assured his friend that he was sure somebody "had it in for him," and would leave no stone unturned to se-

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cure his conviction when the time of trial came.

"I am not borrowing trouble," answered Glen.

"No, but that fop of a Ned Somers may be in this."

Glen simply laughed, saying:

"That simpleton hasn't got sand enough to go into anything of that kind. I have never given him cause for enmity that I know of."

"Perhaps not; but I did, and he knows I work for you. Then there is the girl."

"The girl?"

"Miss Weatherby, of course."

Again Glen laughed.

"As for Myra, she wouldn't go a rod to harm anybody. She is proud as a peacock, but pleasantly undangerous."

Glen and Jack arrived safely at Oxbow with their first raft of shingles. The former called on his Aunt Eunice, who received him with an anxious look.

"I was afraid for you, Glen," said she, placing both hands on the boy's shoulders, looking down into his gray eyes with all a mother's tenderness. "You seem to have enemies here at Oxbow."

"What makes you think so, auntie dear?"

"From what I have heard. And it is reported that you were seen coming out of a saloon not long ago."

The anxiety in the speaker's voice was genuine.

"Now, Aunt Eunice, you didn't believe that, did you?" asked Glen, soberly.

"I could hardly credit it, but Letty said it was true."

"And Letty will not lie," smilingly declared Glen, thinking of brown little Letty Walden, who had been his good chum at school a few years ago, and who was now in the high school, soon to graduate. Furthermore, she was the cousin of the most aristocratic young lady in Oxbow—Miss Myra Weatherby.

"She is a very superior girl, Glen."

"Don't I know that, Aunt Eunice? And she told the truth. I was in a saloon down on Water street—in after a man who belongs to a good family up in the settlements. I wanted to get him out of evil company, back to his wife and children. Was I wrong in doing that, auntie?"

The fearless honesty in the gray eyes of the speaker sent a thrill of pride to the foster-mother's heart.

"Of course I knew it was for some good purpose that you went in such a place, if at all, dear boy," breathed the aunt, her eyes moist with tears. "It is shameful for people to make a handle of that to injure an honest boy."

"Is any one doing that, Aunt Eunice?"

"I heard Ned Somers telling it to a group of high school boys one morning as I passed Mr. Weatherby's office. He intimated that you went into a saloon after liquor."

"Ned Somers would do that, of course," bitterly commented Glen. "He is a sneak, no matter if he is related to the Weatherbys."

Having a little time to himself, Glen Dayton called at the home of his friends the Waldens, to whom he had been of great service earlier in the year. Mrs. Walden was the rich Mr. Weatherby's sister, and he had at one time treated her with scant courtesy because she had married a man of whom he did not approve. Later Glen had been the means of reconciling the families, and Mr. Walden was at present holding a paying position in the booming company of which Weatherby was president.

A girl came running down the steps with outstretched hand.

"You'd better come and see us once in a while, you bad boy," cried the brown-haired, slender miss of 16. "Since you got into that fine job up the river you don't seem to remember your friends."

CHAPTER XII.

GLEN did remember his friends, and above all Letty, whom he had liked best of all the girls who attended the little school back in that day before his Aunt Eunice moved into Oxbow the better to educate her growing nephew.

"I am truly glad to see you, Letty," cried the boy raftsman. "It is true I haven't had time to see my friends since I went to Old Woman's Bend. Really, I don't see Aunt Eunice as often as I'd like. How are you, Letty, anyhow?"

"Tremendously happy, Glen."

"I am glad to hear that, Letty."

"I thought you'd be. Of course I have a little cloud over the face of the sun once in a while."

"So has every one. What little cloud troubles you now, Letty?"

"The smallest one is because Myra has got pouty again."

"Myra at outs with her cousin again, eh?" and Glen laughed.

He had begun to expect occasional outbreaks on the part of the rich lumberman's daughter, so he did not mind them very much. He remembered the last time he had seen her, sweeping like an injured queen out of the big store to come to the aid of foppish Ned Somers. She had scored him good at that time, and he had not met her since.

"Oh, well, I don't care so very much," went on Letty, her piquant little face drawn into sudden seriousness. "Myra and I will never be quite the best of friends, I am afraid. She's too proud to suit me. She has no need to be. My mother would be as wealthy as her father, had she got her rights. You have heard all that, of course, Glen."

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Walden told me something about Shedd Weatherby's appropriating her share of her father's fortune to himself because the law allowed him to do it. I never thought quite as much of the man after I heard that. And Myra may be some like her father."

"She is selfish and rude sometime "

"And snubs her best friends quite unexpectedly."

On this the two agreed. Letty told Glen of her own success at the high school, of her hopes of graduating within another year, and that Myra, altho about a year her senior, had fallen behind in the race for a diploma. Glen was proud of his little schoolmate, as she stood there in her plain yet pretty gingham gown, prouder than he had ever been of that other maid who lived in the big brick and stone mansion on the avenue.

"I must be going, Letty. Hope to see you again soon. I am proud of you, my girl, and shall sit in the front seat on commencement night, be sure of that."

"Thank you, Glen. You were always a [illegible] boy, even when you threw Eben Snoke into the creek for calling me 'freckle face' back in the old country schooldays. Haven't forgotten, have you?"

The girl laughed delightfully. She had improved much since coming to Oxbow. As he was about to go, Letty put out a detaining hand.

"You haven't asked me about another cloud over my sun, Glen."

"No. Really now, is there another one?"

"Truly there is, Glen. I heard about your visiting a saloon last week."

"Oh," laughed the boy, "is that all?"

"All? I should think it was enough," and a pretty pout filled the lips of Miss Walden. "Suppose Jared should hear of that?"

"Well, if he did, it wouldn't hurt him as I know of," suddenly bridled Glen, who noted the extra bit of color that touched the girl's cheek when she mentioned his cousin's name. "What about it, anyhow?"

"That's what I would ask you, Glen."

The dark eyes of the schoolgirl were fixed on his face. The boy flushed thru his tan as he said:

"I don't know that it makes any difference to anybody what I do——"

"It does, Glen, it does," faltered Letty, her eyes growing wet. "You know that I want you to stand true to the temperance pledge you signed when you and I joined the Good Templars at Sandy Creek. We were only young ones then, but the pledge is just as binding."

"Of course it is," he agreed. "But who told you I was in a saloon, Miss Walden?"

"Ned Somers."

"Oh, then he deigns to speak with you?"

"Certainly. Why shouldn't he?"

"And Jared? Does he know?"

"I think not. He writes me every week, but I see him only occasionally. His duties on the boat keep him pretty busy, I understand."

"Oh, well, some folks make mountains out of molehills," said Glen.

"I should call it a big mountain if it's true," said the girl.

"Well, it's true," admitted Glen.

"Oh, Glen Dayton, I am surprised!"

And she was hurt, too, as the boy could see by the pained expression of the girl's face.

"But," proceeded Glen, a grim smile touching his lips, "I didn't drink a drop while I was in there, be sure of that, Letty."

"Goody, goody!"

"You didn't think it of me, Letty? Tell the truth now!"

"No, I did not. But I told Ned Somers I should ask you about it the next time I saw you, and he said of course you would deny it; but you didn't, I'm so glad of that. Please tell me how it all came about."

Glen told her of his visit to the Water street saloon to save a man from disgracing himself. When it was all told Letty bent low and kissed her boy chum on the cheek.

"God bless you, Glen," she whispered. "I knew you would turn out pure gold, altho I had an hour of fear at one time."

Thrilled by the kiss, Glen looked up into her face, saying:

"You need have no fears for me on that score ever again, Letty Walden."

"Oh, I shan't," she breathed unreservedly. "I want all my friends to be good. I counted on you, but you are around so much with all classes of people it was natural for me to fear a little, wasn't it, Glen?"

"Perhaps it was, Letty."

"And now I shall be able to tell Jared all about it."

"You expect to see him soon?"

"He promised to call on his next trip. Won't you come in, Glen?"

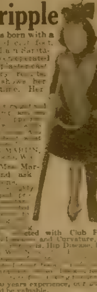
"Not this time, Letty," he said quickly, moving away. "I am full of business all the time these days—can't spare much time for friendly calls. Next winter maybe I will have more leisure."

In his secret heart the boy raftsman hoped to land a winter's job that would pay him better than that of breaking rollways or rafting lumber. Now that he had got his hand in, and the years were being added to his head, he wanted to go into an extensive business for himself. To become one of the prominent business men of Oxbow was his ambition, all of which he kept for the present locked in his own breast.

Glen found Jack, and the two returned to their duties up the river. Af-

(Continued on Page Twenty-Seven.)

This Little Girl Was Born a Cripple



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COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Every man is a hero—in his mind.

Whisky straight makes crooked paths.

But silent partners have a lot to say.

Some good people enjoy telling bad news.

The average girl loves to figure in an engagement.

A violinist draws a salary, the fiddler plays for love.

Dyspepsia is the mother of many a disagreeable disposition.

There is a pleasure in being cranky that only a crank can know.

The cost of experience is never fully realized until one goes to law.

The brick manufacturer has some excuse for wanting the earth.

The female of the species is the weeping expert of the human race.

Rather than waste kindness on an ungrateful man, lavish it on a dog.

No man ever bought a horse that turned out to be just as represented.

Most men would be content with their lot—if it were a lot of money.

The spoon is an insignificant little utensil, yet it creates a stir in every home.

It takes a rousing demonstration to get a small boy out of bed in the early morn.

When a man is ill he seldom has a nightshirt pretty enough to receive callers in.

A female diplomat is a woman who can keep a hired girl for six consecutive weeks.

There are times when even the parson imagines there is no earthly hope for the choir.

As a matter of fact there's very little common sense in the world—most of it is uncommon.

A man is always eating something he shouldn't and a woman is always saying something she shouldn't.

Never boast of the work you are going to do. Some men work all the time and have nothing to show for it, either.

This is the season of the year when a man looks in his backyard and decides the one thing needful is a goat that will consume old tin cans.

Many an excellent man is discouraged by the thought that the world will have to wait until after he is dead before it finds out how good he was.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

High collars are not quite so much in evidence as hitherto on coats.

Black broadcloth with soutache braid embroidery is considered decidedly smart.

A very Russian-looking hat indeed is bordered and made with a very high full crown.

Novelty buttons in gold, silver, enamel, and jeweled effects are a smart finishing touch on the new gowns.

The toque altogether of soft plumage, with upstanding wings at the sides, is one of the prettiest of millinery fashions.

The pointed overdrapery gives opportunity to remodel last year's evening dress. Make the overskirt of tulle in color to match the body of the dress and drape these over white tulle.

More depends upon the petticoat now than the ordinary observer would think. Indeed, many modistes are making it do the whole "distending function" for the crinoline effects on the new gowns. A soft evening frock of silk or chiffon that does not heed the new silhouette may be brought within the law by a petticoat which is correctly wired into the required limits.

❧

RECIPES.

FRUIT COCKTAIL—A delightful first course for the winter luncheon or midday Sunday dinner is fruit cocktail, served ice cold, in dainty glasses. Use the fruits of the season; oranges, bananas, apples, white grapes, and perhaps a little chopped pineapple. Skin the grapes, pare the apples and cut the oranges in very thin slices thru pulp and rind. Then chop all the fruit in small pieces and soak an hour in their own juice, sweetened with sugar. Then stand on the ice until just before serving.

BAKED HALIBUT—Three or four pounds of halibut. Dip the dark skin in boiling water, and scrape clean. Rub well with salt and pepper. Put into pan and pour milk over it till half an inch deep. Bake about an hour, basting with the milk. When the fish is nearly done sprinkle buttered crumbs over the top. The milk keeps the fish moist, is a good substitute for pork and makes the fish brown better. Use just enough milk to baste, and let it cook away toward the last. Serve with plain drawn butter, egg sauce or tomato sauce and garnish with slices of hard-boiled eggs.

NUT SPICE LOAF—Cream half a cupful of butter with two cupfuls of sugar; add the yolks of four eggs, well beaten, and half a cupful of molasses. Sift two and a half cupfuls of flour—sifted once before measuring—with a teaspoonful of cinnamon, half a teaspoonful of nutmeg. Dredge a cupful of raisins, chopped, half a cupful of cleaned currants and half a cupful of English walnut meats in the flour, and add to the liquid ingredients. Then add a teaspoonful of soda and a teaspoonful and a half of baking powder and bake. These ingredients make two loaves, but half the amount can be made satisfactorily.

❧

HEALTH NOTES.

To cure frosted feet rub them with spirits of turpentine at night before going to bed.

During the cold weather many persons suffer with earache. To relieve it roast a raisin and bind it as hot as it can be borne on the ear. The result is magical, relief coming quickly.

The woman who does her own cooking often burns herself while frying potatoes or meat. For any kind of a burn or scald apply the white of an egg. It is most soothing and will cause the wound to heal quickly.

Sea water baths are excellent, as they stimulate the circulation—especially if you have a really brisk rub-down afterward with a rough towel. A box of proper salt for this purpose, obtainable quite moderately from any chemist, will be found a cheap investment in the end. A handful of salt is sufficient for an ordinary bath, which can be just the ordinary warmth.

❧

NEEDLEWORK.

What to do with an old spread has found an answer in a couch cover. When the spread shows signs of wear and promises not to come out of the laundry more than a few times, dye it any color you wish and cut and finish it to fit a couch that needs a cover.

Ribbon is used on everything, beginning with dressing sacques and ending with evening gowns.

French knots are often used to ornament a tray cloth. When the knots are of a pretty shade of pink, blue, or yellow the monogram shows up very well beneath the glass covering of the serving tray.

Knitting and needlework are woman's constant companions now, and the reticule has therefore assumed a really practical aspect. One that is worn with an embroidered velvet bracelet round the left arm is very long and in shape something like a bellows. It is composed of cleverly plaited silk, with a stole of embroidered velvet in the center ending with a tassel. When there is much to put into the bag the silk obligingly expands; when little, the narrowness of the bag is elegant indeed. As beading and applique work are liked again now these forms of decoration may be used instead of the ordinary silk embroidery.

❧

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Hashes and minces are much improved if the meat be soaked in the gravy or sauce some time before being reheated.

Save all the tissue paper that comes into the house. It is excellent for drying and polishing lamp chimneys and mirrors when they are washed.

Sow grass seed over the bare spots in the lawn now; the winter snows will nourish the seed and it will be ready to sprout immediately with the spring.

Wash the tins well in hot soapy water and also add some soda and dry well while quite hot. Clean the inside of the tin pan or saucepan with lemon juice, if necessary. Clean the outside with whiting mixed to a paste with a little water. Let the paste dry thoroly, then polish first with a soft duster and then with leather.

❧

A TIRED WOMAN'S LAST WORDS.

Here lies an old woman who always was tired,
For she lived in a house where help wasn't hired.
Her last words on earth were: "Dear friends, I am going
Where washing ain't done, nor churning nor sewing;
And everything there will be just to my wishes,
For where they don't eat there's no washing dishes;
I'll be where loud anthems will always be ringing.
But having no voice, I'll get rid of the singing.
Don't mourn for me now, and mourn for me never,
For I'm going to do nothing forever and ever."

❧

THE FAIR SEX.

"Is it fair," asked Mrs. Easy, "to allow your husband to attend a fair with some other fair, and pay her fare?"

"Hardly fair; and if it was my husband, she'd fare hard," responded Mrs. Gripen.

❧

NOT THAT KIND.

She went into a shop to buy some toilet soap, and when the shopman was expatiating on its merits, about made up her mind to purchase, but when he said, "It would keep off chaps," she said she didn't want that kind.

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The Fairy Corner

DON'S JOURNEY.

Dogs and cats are as different as two ends of a stick. Dogs are just a lot of extra children, but cats are cats and always will be cats, no matter how kittenish they may have been in the days of their early youth. A dog will let himself be killed rather than have you hurt. A cat looks out for herself and doesn't care much what happens to other people. A dog will live anywhere and be happy if he is with the people he knows. A cat stays at home and coolly accepts the new family that moves into the house. Yet the dog retains a trace of the wild homing instinct that is strong in the cat and other uncivilizable creatures. Once in a while it appears, as in the case of Don, the dog from Bridgeport, Conn., who went home like a carrier pigeon, tho not so fast.

Don is an English setter, a year and a half old, and he lived in Bridgeport before he was sold to a man in Norfolk, Conn. Bridgeport is at the southern edge of Connecticut, and Norfolk is so far north that if it were on the other side of the mountain it would be in Massachusetts. The entire width of the State lies between the two towns, but that is not such a great distance as it might be.

Connecticut is not a large State. Indeed, its area could be packed into the northeast corner of Illinois, along the lake shore, and not touch the nearby cities of Kankakee on the south and Ottawa and Belvidere on the west. Since this is the case, you need not be astonished at learning that the width of Connecticut is only a little more than sixty miles. Don traveled somewhat more than this distance, however, even if he went by the shortest roads, because you can't go straight across hilly country like eastern Connecticut unless you fly, and Don isn't that kind of a dog. But, wings or no wings, Don went home.

The family in Norfolk thought that Don was contented with his dwelling place. He seemed happy. He even made friends with the cat, which was young, and therefore not no snippy as if she had been older. But when the back yard gate was left open, Don footed it out into the open as if he had just remembered an important engagement. He didn't even take time to say good-by to the cat, which proves that he was in a great hurry, for Don is a well-bred dog.

He was missing. There was no doubt of that. The family waited for him to come back, and his new owner hunted for him along the roads and thru the mountains. After a while his former owner was called from Bridgeport and came up to Norfolk to join in the search. It was hoped that his familiar voice might bring Don out of the mountains. But it didn't. Don wasn't there.

The first thing heard of him came over the long distance telephone from Bridgeport. The message was from the brother of Don's former owner, and was to the effect that the dog had turned up in Bridgeport and was at that moment sitting outside the door and waiting for somebody to let him in. So the hunt was called off, and everybody began to figure out how the dog had got home. A bee-line distance of sixty miles means seventy miles by road, and probably Don wandered about a bit. You might expect that. You would wander, too, if you had to go on a long journey like that on foot and didn't know the way and couldn't read sign posts or ask anybody for directions. But, then, you haven't Don's instinct.

SERAPHINA'S VISIT.

The old hoot owl sat in the tall cedar tree
And invited his lady love over to tea.
Said he, "I'll be singing a nice little song
As fair Seraphina is coming along."

"Oh hoo and oh hee! how pleased she will be.
When she hears me singing a song," quoth he.
The old hoot owl twinkled his wise gray eye.
"I must keep a sharp watch on the passers-by.
For tho I've invited a guest to my tea,
The meat is still lacking," quoth he, quoth he.

"Oh hoo and oh hee! how vexéd she will be
If there should be nothing but tea," quoth he.
Seraphina sat watching hard by on a tree,
"He'd better be finding the meat," quoth she.
"Than spending his time singing songs for me;
Indeed and I'll not venture there for my tea.

"Oh hoo and oh hee! I want something for tea
Besides silly singing," quoth she, quoth she.

She rolled her round eyes to another tall tree,
And a gay young cock called out jauntily,
"Oh, come over here, my pretty, and see
What I have to offer you now for tea,"

"Oh hoo and oh hee! you're the bird for me;
That sounds more like it," quoth she, quoth she.

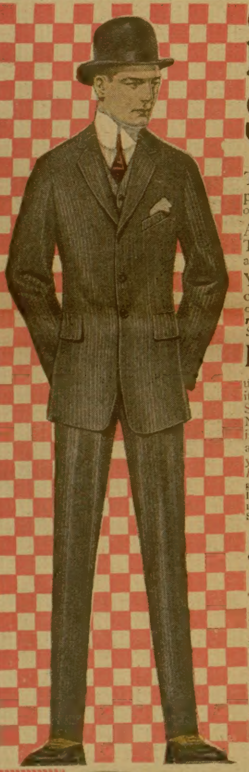
So sweet Seraphina, on pleasure now bent,
Shook out her gray plumage and gayly she went.
They relished their supper and laughed loud with glee.
That they'd tricked the old owl in the tall cedar tree.

"Oh hoo!" cried the ancient gray owl, "and oh hee!
So that is the way Seraphina serves me!
Hence, my own quiet way is the best that can be.
I'll never invite her again to my tea."

CAUSE AND RESULT.

There is an inoffensive cat that lives in the village of Coeymans, N. Y. There is an offensive dog that lives in the same village, and Coeymans is too small a place to hold the two without disturbance of the peace. The dog was ragging the cat one day, and the cat flew across the yard of the hotel, where the grass grows thick. A horse was grazing in the yard, and the two streaks of animal that flashed by under his nose frightened him. He was a nervous horse, anyway. So he kicked up his hind legs and galloped across the yard. A scythe was lying in the tall grass, and the horse stumbled over it and fell. The sharp blade cut the horse so badly that the latter had to be shot. (It would be more natural to say "it had to be shot," but more smart young persons might be writing in and asking why anybody should wish to shoot a scythe, and, of course, there would not be any answer.) You see what happened all because the dog chased the cat, which he had no business to do. He did not catch the cat, anyway, and—to tell the truth—he probably had no hope or intention of catching the cat, and would not have known what to do with her if he had caught her.

There are several morals in this story, and they are all different. You may choose any one that pleases you or else hunt up another story.



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Hunting the Red Gown.

(Continued From Page 19.)

"How shall I ever thank you, Molly?" she asked softly.

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Van Horn," replied Molly. "But I'll be very much obliged to you if you'd give me enough time off from answering the doorbell and such interruptions to write up my notebook. It'll be quite a job."

"Indade it will," said Katie. "But your tay is ready. I'll put it on the table, and thin maybe Mrs. Van Horn will do us the honor to sit with us while yez tell us how it was that ye wint over to New York and, single-handed, unraveled the thrid of two murdhers, while the whole Washington Police Department was lost in a fog."

The End.

* * *

Glen, the Boy Pilot.

(Continued From Page Twenty-Four.)

fairs moved peacefully on for days and weeks. The lumber was fully cared for and about half the output of shingles by the time Glen was summoned to court to answer for cutting the boom.

The boy appeared with Andrew Jackson Dedham and a host of friends behind him, ready and anxious to contest the suit to the bitter end. By this time the up-river millowner was beginning to estimate his boy raftsman at his true worth. The previous year he had intrusted rafting operations to a full-grown man, who professed to have been in the business for a number of years in Wisconsin. The outcome was wholly disastrous. Dedham lost much money, and was glad to find that the present season he was doing better than any previous year, much of it being due to the steady and brilliant work of Glen Dayton.

To the surprise of the plaintiff in the case, their Indian witness at the examination failed to put in an appearance at the trial. However, even with his testimony, Glen could not have been convicted, since several witnesses now came forward to testify to his absence by several miles from the scene when the boom was cut.

An angry man was the boss of the boom company when Glen walked from the courtroom a free boy.

"An atrocious miscarriage of justice!" avowed Shedd Weatherby.

"A miscarriage of a sneaking plot to ruin a brave young man!" said Andrew Jackson Dedham, turning sharply upon the king of Oxbow.

"I wonder if you believe any such nonsense?" jeered Weatherby.

"I not only believe it, I know it, Shedd Weatherby," declared the up-river millowner. "Furthermore, I warn you that any further attempts to interfere with the business of the north river country will be met with reprisals that will give you cause to feel far more sore than you do today. We have stood it to be bullyragged about as long as good nature will allow."

"Hear the man talk!"

"You will see us act instead of talk, sir!" thundered Dedham. "We have right and justice on our side, and we shall hereafter assert those rights."

"Well, see here," rasped Mr. Weatherby, "do you uphold this high-handed cutting of our boom, the destroying of property?"

"I did not have to do it in this case, since our boys had nothing to do with it."

"Who did, then?"

"I do not know; neither do I care, Mr. Weatherby.

With that the big man of Old Woman's Bend stalked away.

The soreness existing between the millowners of Oxbow and the upstream manufacturers was more deeply embittered instead of eased by the outcome of the suit to fix the guilt of boom-cutting upon Glen Dayton. That enmity grew with time till it was little less fierce than that at one time existing between the feudal clans of olden times.

Glen found things moving smoothly after this for a long while. So many rafts were to be run he placed some of them in the care of men he educated for the purpose, among them Eph Eckles and Tim Brown, the latter a most trustworthy man. As for Eckles, since the little difficulty early in the season he seemed to make good for his former shortcomings.

About the middle of October, Glen sent Tim and Eph down the river as pilots for two uncommonly large shingle rafts. Jack Adams was ill, else he would have intrusted him with one of the rafts.

About midnight of the day of flotage, Glen Dayton was aroused from sound slumber by hearing some one outside the boarding-house shouting his name. The boy at once drew on his clothes and went below.

There stood big Eph Eckles, the picture of an angry, disgruntled man.

This capital story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you if you send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

THE REMEDY.

"I got Wilbur to go to a bazaar last night," declared Mrs. Haddon to a friend. "Really, I felt as if I had accomplished as difficult a feat as sending a girl thru college or a boy off to the war."

"How did you do it?" asked the friend, in envious admiration. "I have been able to send my daughter and my son to college, but to get my husband deliberately to face a charity bazaar is more than I can ever hope to accomplish."

"It takes diplomacy and infinite tact," said Mrs. Haddon, visibly pluming herself. "I began by placing great emphasis on the kind of dinner that was to be served before the sale began, and upon the people who were to be there. My husband said he hated sitting down to dinner with a lot of people he didn't know, and eating a lot of things made by all sorts of indifferent cooks. I assured him that we were to have a private table, that the food was to be the perfection of cookery and that the waitresses were pretty young girls who would anticipate his every wish."

"He couldn't resist that combination?" asked the friend. "None of the inducements you have mentioned would have the slightest effect on my husband."

"Well, I was surprised when Wilbur agreed to meet me at the church at six. I was still more surprised when he appeared on time wearing a smile on his face."

"Did all go merry as a marriage bell?" asked the friend.

"Yes. Wilbur never complained once thruout the evening. The dinner was really delicious. There are no other cooks like those whose doughnuts are inspired by a genuine zeal for a good cause. After the dessert my husband looked as radiant as if he were at some commercial banquet instead of a church bazaar."

"But how was it when he came to the pin cushions and pen wipers, the necktie holders and cases for shaving paper? Didn't he protest then?"

"Not at all. I turned him loose among them as remorsefully as if I was abandoning a child to the waves. It really was delightful to see how gracefully he assumed the high duties of a buyer at a bazaar. I saw him gazing seriously at some violet scented sachet bags and his attitude toward hand-knit neckties was really beautiful. He took chances at guessing how many beans there were in a bottle, purchased several tickets for a raffle and swung his fish pole into a pond of packages with as much eagerness as he would have displayed in catching real fish."

"But did he buy anything?" demanded the friend.

"Buy!" echoed Mrs. Haddon. "He bought everything from a Japanese doll to a linen bedspread. He engaged in a perfect orgy of buying. Why, that man's recklessness made me gasp.

"Every little while he would approach me carrying some perfectly absurd article, a lady's slipper bag or a housekeeper's companion or a pink shell-stitch shoulder shawl. Then he would proceed to expatiate on the merits of the articles that he had bought until I was positively ill at the sight of them.

"I tried to caution him under my breath not to buy everything that was shown him, and I endeavored to explain that neither I nor any one we knew had need of a pink shawl. But he was obdurate and went away gleefully, only to return a little later with a pair of pale blue bedroom slippers that were too small for any human feet and a boudoir cap that no woman but one who lives in a boudoir would ever wear."

"Don't you believe," asked the friend, "that there was method in your husband's madness? Perhaps he was trying to cure you of your interest in such affairs, so that you would cease to entice him to such places."

"Well," replied Mrs. Haddon, "I thought of that. Still, I am not really sure whether it was this or whether he was not affected with a kind of bazaar madness that sometimes overtakes people who attend such affairs. I only know that no persuasion on my part would stop him from purchasing the most ridiculous articles, and that he seemed to lose all sense of discrimination or appropriateness.

"The consequence is that the drawers in my closet are filled with a lot of things that I don't know what to do with. When I think of the useful articles that might have been bought with the money spent on these superfluities I could weep."

"I must say," declared her friend, "that I think your husband is a very deep man, a real philosopher. I don't believe he will be asked to attend another bazaar this winter."

"Not by me," declared the man's wife, firmly. "I shall never mention a bazaar again."

* * *

Encouraging.

"Here, my dear," said the husband, producing his purse, "here's fifty dollars I won playing cards in the smoking room last night. You may have it to buy that dress you wanted."

Reluctantly the conscientious wife took the money, then said, with an expression of rigid rectitude:

"I simply shudder at the thought of using money gained in such a way. Henry, promise me that after you have won enough for me to buy the hat to go with the dress you will never again touch those awful cards. I don't want my husband to become a gambler."

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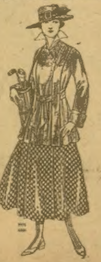

8976 Double-Breasted Coat, 34 to 42 bust.
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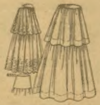
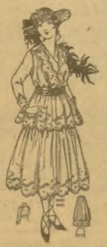


8981 Flounced Skirt for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



8983 Plain Blouse with Over Portion for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.
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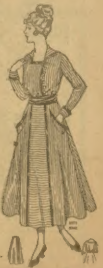
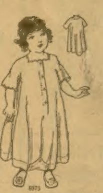
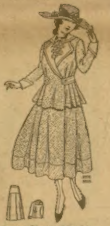


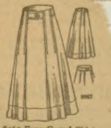
8973 Blouse with Side Closing, 34 to 42 bust.
[illegible] Front, 24 to 34 waist.



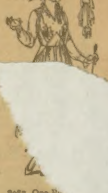
8975 Child's Night Gown, 2, 4 and 6 years.



8970 Short Coat for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.
8915 Two-Piece Skirt with Yoke for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



8967 Four Gored Skirt for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



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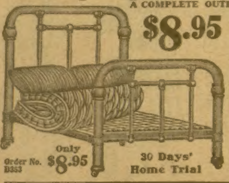

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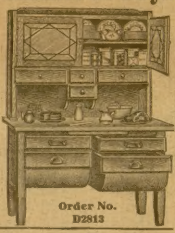

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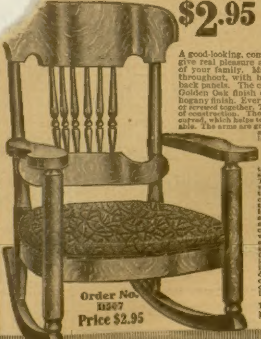

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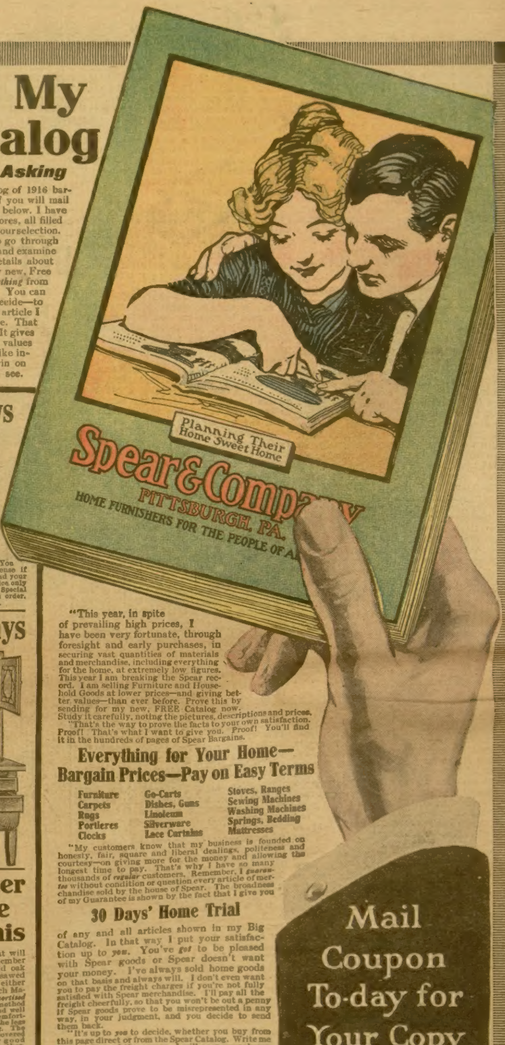
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NATHANIEL SPEAR, President

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